

NVMMEN

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW FOR THE
HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

ISSUED BY THE

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

VOLUME XIX



LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1972

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

KOHELETH'S CONCEPT OF OPPOSITES

as compared to samples of Greek Philosophy and Near and
Far Eastern Wisdom Classics

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Koheleth offers a simple version of the golden mean. On the one hand, he warns against the hazards of being over-righteous and unduly wise, since in that manner one will destroy himself. On the other hand, he cautions against being over-wicked and acting the part of the fool, as that is a sure way to go to an early grave. Such inordinate displays are unrealistic and contribute little to longevity.

Acknowledging the fact of human imperfection as he does, Koheleth pictures the golden mean as being tarnished. The mean is a blend of righteousness and wickedness, because it is necessary for the individual to grasp or hold onto ¹⁾ both of these qualities. No man alive is righteous consistently, and to try to be good all of the time is impossible. Being neither completely just nor unjust, **the person who finds the mean** would be the one who strives but often fails at doing good (7: 16-18, 20).

However, several questions emerge. (1) Does Koheleth interpret the golden mean in the familiar way that Aristotle does? Are the two thinkers comparable when it comes to instructions for finding the mean, the range of experiences, and the choice of analogies? (2) Is the golden mean a part of a larger formula by which opposites are resolved in Koheleth? **Are there multiple patterns by which opposites are related by him?** If so, is his interpretation similar to other ancient students of opposites in the Orient and Greece? (3) Does Koheleth look for hidden meanings within situations which can account for the existence of opposites, in the way that Oriental thinkers do? Are opposites the result of distorted apprehension and the misleading forms which experience takes, as for example the early Taoists believe? While there is widespread agreement on Koheleth's postexilic composition, there is

1) Literally "to seize," *tšʔihōz*, 7: 18.

little discussion of his explanation of the different ways by which opposites are related to each other, particularly in comparison with men reflecting on the problem in Asia. (4) Is the fact of opposites explained according to the principle of reciprocal causation and in light of interdependent processes by Koheleth? Do his habits of thought resemble those of Greek philosophers like Plato and Heraclitus? Scholars usually place Koheleth in the Greek period,²⁾ but they rarely investigate his interpretation and groupings of opposites in as much detail as Greek theories. (5) Can it be demonstrated that Koheleth develops conclusions independently of other traditions or that his reasoning about the fortunes and desires of the individual simply grows out of his own Semitic roots? In the way that Koheleth does, do the authors of Babylonian wisdom literature ever philosophize at all about the paradoxical situations in which people exist?

The Golden Mean in Koheleth and Aristotle

Koheleth's golden mean signifies an attitude rather than a detailed analysis or list of instructions; it does not provide a clear course to follow or specific point at which to aim, in the sense of the Aristotelian mean. Unlike Aristotle, Koheleth nowhere attempts to define terms like "excess," "deficiency," and "mean." Although Koheleth seeks to add things together frequently (7:27), he does not so much as hint that finding the mean is like finding the center of a circle, straightening a warped board, or swinging a ship clear of the surf. In calculating the difference between wisdom and foolishness, Koheleth provides few if any directions for aiming at and hitting the mean, as Aristotle does.³⁾

Do these omissions imply overt differences between the two moralists? How are virtue and vice interpreted?

For Aristotle, virtue is the right amount of fear, desire, pity, and other emotions; vice is too much or too little of anger, boldness, pleasure, and other feelings. The clue to moral character lies in having the proper measure of emotion.⁴⁾ For Koheleth, vice is too much righteousness and wisdom; it is too much wickedness and foolishness; it is not too much feeling or sentiment of one kind or another (7: 16-17).

2) O. S. Rankin, Robert Gordis, Robert H. Pfeiffer, and R. B. Y. Scott among others.

3) J. A. K. Thomson, Trans., *The Ethics of Aristotle*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1953, p. 59. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, Chapter 9.

4) *Ibid.*, p. 51 Book II, Chapter 6.

Indeed, some excesses of feeling are desirable and even preferable to others, as sorrow is preferable to laughter (7:3), and having patience to being quick-tempered (7:8-9).

Aristotle says that goodness consists of expressing one's feelings toward the right persons under the right circumstances in the right manner. There should be an attempt to be moderate and temperate and to exhibit self-control. "It is easy to fly into a passion—anybody can do that." ⁵⁾ Without refuting the value of restrained behavior, Koheleth believes that one should cultivate the virtues of indifference and disregard for what persons are saying. He acknowledges that cursing others is something everyone too readily engages in, finding it necessary to practice indifference to the gossip and malice which men circulate. Koheleth puts it this way: "Do not give heed to all the things that men say, lest you hear servant cursing you; your heart knows that many times you have yourself cursed others (7:21-22 RSV)." It's not so much a matter of regulating or being temperate in the display of feeling as, having been hateful oneself, becoming immune to similar displays on the part of others.

Koheleth's simple pairing of extremes stands in contrast to Aristotle's systematic analysis of the golden mean, use of geometric and nautical analogies, and careful definitions. While he doesn't attempt to demonstrate the comparison, Robert Gordis rightly draws the conclusion, "It is true that the 'golden mean' is urged in 7:14-18, but from a vantage-point uniquely characteristic of our author, and in a spirit entirely remote from the ethical considerations of the Greek philosopher." ⁶⁾ Koheleth's mean is more implicit than explicit and represents a dislike of extremes, an attitude in which greater attention is given to what should be avoided than what the proper course should be, and to staying away from extremes than finding what is in the middle. He shuns excesses in righteousness or wickedness rather than in the amount of emotion. Turning a deaf ear to the idle talk around him, on the part of the man who himself may be guilty of malediction, is a matter of enlightened self-interest. Although avoiding disparate pitfalls helps man stay alive, it comprises only one aspect of Koheleth's wider approach to the problem of opposites.

5) *Ibid.*

6) Robert Gordis, *Koheleth—the Man and His World*, New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1955, p. 51.

Koheleth's Formula for Combining Opposites

Koheleth devises a formula for the resolving of opposites. Finding ample illustrations in the proverbs of the people and in the ironic things that happen to individuals, he conceives of several different combinations by which opposing qualities may be joined, one of which is the attitude of the mean or the avoidance of extremes. Koheleth assumes that reality occurs in pairs. Acknowledging the multiplicity and complexity of experience, the ambiguous life situations in which people find themselves, he argues for the diverse and contradictory nature of existence. Nature provides life and death, war and peace, patience and anger, as well as good luck and misfortune (3:2, 7:1, 3:8, 7:8-9, 7:14). As R. B. Y. Scott observes, "Everything has its opposite . . . , so that man must not count on the continuance of either good or bad fortune." 7)

Koheleth's doctrine of opposites consists of a variety of logical patterns by which ideals may be paired. Of two qualities or conditions, it is possible for one to be prized above the other, for both to be desirable, for one to cancel the other, or for neither to be desirable. Two goals may promise great reward; they may be regarded as worthless; the last may have more value than the first; or the one may offset the other. For Koheleth, there are four attitudes toward the combining of opposites, four principles by which pairs and opposites are connected (7:1-25).

(a) When one condition is the opposite of another, it is often preferable to its mate, due to its relative position in time. Of two opposing events, the last ranks higher than the first, since the end is more important than the beginning (7:8). Koheleth reasons that the day you die is greater than the day you are born. The last thing that happens to man is death; the last rites for anyone are burial rites. Far more precious than ointment is the reputation a person leaves behind (7:1-2).

It therefore follows that sorrow is more valuable than laughter, not only because sadness typifies man's final end, but because a scowl does the heart good (7:3-6). It is likewise illogical to claim that yesterday was better than today (7:10); people who with nostalgia remember the past often forget the fact that history has a curious way of repeating itself. Mankind has no memory; the race suffers from amnesia; "there

7) R. B. Y. Scott, *Ecclesiastes* (*The Anchor Bible*, v. 18), New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965, p. 235.

is no remembrance of former things (1:11 RSV).” Just as the wind blows in a circle from south to north, and there is a ceaseless cycle of events in nature, so there is a continuous round of events in history, and what happened in ages past doubtless will take place again (1:6, 9-11). “Whatever is has been already, and whatever is to come has been already (3:15 NEB).” It is equally unwise to start up in anger, for the wise man is patient and endures to the end (7:8-9).

As to the superiority of death to birth, sadness to joy, the present to the past, and being long-suffering to being quick-tempered, the rationale remains the same. The end counts more than the beginning; what follows matters more than what precedes; what lasts is what has worth. In these cases Koheleth employs “a principle of preference,” wherein two circumstances occur, but the last is preferable to the first.

b) Where one quality is coupled with another, both traits may be regarded as desirable, because the combination enhances the survival of the person. Koheleth teaches that being wise and being wealthy are good; these virtues keep one alive and safe from harm. Knowledge and wealth are two covers of the same book, since safeguarding wisdom is like safeguarding money (7:11-12). When a man is wise but poor, he is quickly forgotten. A defenseless town was attacked by a king; the place was rescued by the counsel of a poor wise man; but none of the citizens could remember him (9:14-15). If a man desires riches alone, he finds he is not satisfied, there are more mouths to feed, and his goods are shortly dissipated (5:10-11). Therefore it is important for a man to be both wise and rich. Wisdom or wealth does not suffice by itself. In this context Koheleth used “a both-and principle,” in which two qualities exist, and both are described as desirable.

(c) When one condition is an alternate to another, it may cancel its rival, thereby concealing what is transpiring in the world. If an individual undergoes one event which contradicts another, he becomes bewildered as to what life affords next. Koheleth teaches that the day of prosperity is offset by the day of adversity, not only because the two stand against each other in the manner of opposites, but because they hide what the future will bring forth. When everything is going well is a good time to rejoice. When hard times are commonplace is a good time for reflection. God makes both sets of circumstances, and a thoughtful man can scarcely expect to find out what happens after he is dead (7:14).

Part of Koheleth's reasoning is implicit in his skepticism and in his question, "That which is, is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out (7:24 RSV)?" No matter how hard he looks for the meaning or existence, for a way to add up "the sum of things," all he can discover is that reality is remote, and its depths are impenetrable (7:23-25). Part of Koheleth's thinking also stems from his determinism and from his belief that there is a time fixed for every event which occurs on earth. From birth and death to war and peace, there are times set aside but not disclosed for everything (3:1-8). Mostly Koheleth knows that men's changing fortunes make the future uncertain and contradictory. For this reason he used "a principle of cancellation," wherein two events take place, but the one cancels the other. There is not only the "loss of the possibility of any meaning in history," as John F. Priest holds,⁸) but a lack of clearness and direction to the future.

(d) Where one extreme is linked with another, neither trait appears to be desirable, if the life of the individual is threatened. Koheleth thinks that being too righteous or being too wicked is dangerous; such aspiration is destructive and sends you to a premature death (7:16-17). Neither excessive righteousness nor excessive wickedness is admirable, and no upright person can go through life without ever being wrong (7:20). Striving toward goodness to the point where you are sanctimonious and hypocritical, or working inordinately at evil doing, should be avoided. Thus Koheleth's mean represents an antipathy toward extremes and illustrates "a neither-nor principle," in which two goals are available, but neither commends itself as desirable. When people are faced with opposing goals, **they sometimes should be content merely** to avoid the extremes. As avoidance is one way to handle conflicts, so the mean is one principle in Koheleth's fourfold formula for dealing with opposites. Because those who are skeptical have a tendency to use logic to advantage, it is not surprising to discover that Koheleth employs logical modes of thought, reasoning "from A to not-A and back again,"⁹) and combining opposites in several ways.¹⁰)

8) John F. Priest, "Humanism, Skepticism, and Pessimism in Israel," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XXXVI, 4 (December, 1968), 324.

9) Duncan Black Macdonald, *The Hebrew Literary Genius*, p. 207. As quoted by O. S. Rankin, *The Book of Ecclesiastes (The Interpreter's Bible, v. 5)*, New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956, p. 17.

10) Chapter 7 is loosely tied together by these four principles; some of the same opposites are found in chapters 3 and 7 (3:2a and 7:1b, 3:4 and 7:3);

Opposites in Kohleth and Oriental Thought

Kohleth is by no means the only man in the ancient world to hold a doctrine of opposites or to detect opposites within the fluctuations of human moods. As a look at the Orient proves, the early Taoists are engrossed in finding what opposites are and are like, how they are tied together, why human conduct and feeling illustrate them so amply, and what subtle forms they take. Not being content to identify the distinguishable phenomena in the processes of nature, the early Taoists look for contradictory qualities in the movement and development of all things, including the various emotions. Stemming from the Warring States period, the Tao Te Ching and the essays of Chuang-tzu mirror the problem of flux and change. Like Kohleth, Taoist sages engage in witty and satirical remarks concerning moral and regal conduct, and their subtle reasoning often turns to the words of the wise and good man, and beyond that to his view of the world. It seems as reasonable to compare samples of Near and Far Eastern wisdom classics as Hebrew-Jewish wisdom and prophetic traditions. According to Gordis, the lands of the Near East in the first millenium B.C.E. "were not only linked together geographically as parts of the Fertile Crescent, but constituted the individual members of the more inclusive larger pattern of Oriental civilization."¹¹) Before drawing analogies between Kohleth and fluxionist teachings in Asia, it is necessary to examine more carefully other of Kohleth's habits of thought.

Kohleth frequently likes to pair together feelings like crying and laughing, love and hate, sorrow and gladness, and patience and anger. Set times occur for each of these emotions (3:4a, 8a, 7:3, 8b, 9). Kohleth further insists that there is a fixed time for every activity, birth and death, planting and plucking, and demolishing and restoring. What God does can neither be known by man nor altered, and whatever takes place was prescribed in ages past (3:1-3, 11, 14, 15, 6:10). Not only do the changing physical forces in the universe follow a natural course of their own, in the turning and the movement of the wind and the streams, but there is a time for every event which occurs beneath

the repetitious character and sameness of human existence are recurring themes in Kohleth (1:9-11, 3:15, 6:10, 7:10). With the exception of the Epilogue (12:9-14) Robert Gordis even argues for the unity of Kohleth as a whole on the basis of the prevailing mood of skepticism and the author's habit of creating new proverbs while citing traditional ones (*op. cit.*, pp. 73-4).

¹¹) *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the sky. Having wealth and losing it, death and birth, prosperity and adversity, and righteousness and wickedness all have their place in the flow of events comprising empty human existence (1:6-7, 3:1, 5:13-14, 7:1, 14, 15).

Koheleth discovers opposites in nature as well as human experience, and it is clear to him that the processes of nature often follow a cyclical pattern and forever are changing. One generation is replaced by another, but the universe always exists. The sun rises, but it also sets and returns to the point of rising. Although the wind blows southward, the currents of air return to the north, moving round and round in a continuous circuit. While water keeps flowing into the ocean, the ocean never is filled. Whatever happened in ages past continuously will be repeated in recurring cycles of existence and will not be remembered by later peoples (1:1-11). Bertrand Russell is not entirely correct when, in his modern paraphrasing of Koheleth's world-view, he says, "matter is perpetually in motion, yet nothing abides,"¹²⁾ since the universe with its cycles and processes does remain.

The early Taoists are as absorbed as Koheleth with the manner in which opposites are incorporated in the scheme of things; they are equally occupied with uncovering opposites within men's vacillating moods. For men like Chuang-tzu, meaning lies in the reversal of preceding states and in the diminishing and increasing of the flow of existence. The early Taoists' attitudes toward opposites demonstrate some of the same habits of thought as Koheleth's, particularly when taking a fluxionist and cyclical approach to nature, outlining the contents of the natural course of events, adopting the view that every occurrence is predetermined, and describing the way in which emotions are matched. As Huston Smith observes, "A rhythm falls upon the visible, breaking it into day and night, summer and winter, male and female, but these divisions are caught up and ordered in a superior integration, the Tao, which resolves the tensions and reconciles the apparently irreconcilable."¹³⁾

Chuang-tzu also shows us that in the realm of emotions there are the opposites of joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, and worries and

12) Bertrand Russell, *The Conquest of Happiness*, New York: Horace Liveright, 1930, p. 29.

13) Huston Smith, "Transcendence in Traditional China," *Religious Studies*, v. 2, no. 2 (April, 1967), 189.

regrets. Although we are unable to pinpoint their origin, these moods are like the music of the earth and come on us by turns.¹⁴⁾ Chuang-tzu likewise perceives that the relentless scheme of things manifests itself in experiences like life and death, that these events are predetermined by God, and that such circumstances cannot be altered by man. From time immemorial, it can be said: "Life and Death are a part of Destiny. Their sequence, like day and night, is of God, beyond the interference of man. These all lie in the inevitable nature of things."¹⁵⁾ In spite of no one knowing how it is so, all things develop and find their proper place. Whenever people tie and glue pieces together, they are meddling unnecessarily.¹⁶⁾ In the essays of Chuang-tzu, as in the views of Koheleth, there are certain alterations in the flow of existence which follow one another. "Life and death, possession and loss, success and failure, poverty and wealth, and virtue and vice" are among the conditions described as "changes of things in the natural course of events."¹⁷⁾ Still, one should cultivate repose and harmony within himself independently of this series of events.¹⁸⁾

Chuang-tzu studies the cycles and changes in the processes of nature in which opposites are found as carefully as Koheleth. Chuang-tzu's remarks about the Tao indicate that the way of nature is forever, without start or finish. That material things are brought forth and pass away is not worthy of attention. The processes of time cannot be checked, so that years gone by cannot be remembered. Growth and decay make up a cycle, with the ceaseless changes in the life of things moving ahead by themselves. Other comments ensue about the forces of wind and sea. According to Chuang-tzu's discussion of the invisible strength of the wind, the wind is portrayed as blowing noisily from the north

14) Lin Yutang, Ed., *The Wisdom of China and India*, New York: Random House, 1942, pp. 634-5. *Chuangtse*, "On Levelling All Things."

15) *Ibid.*, p. 659. "The Great Supreme."

16) *Ibid.*, p. 668. "Joined Toes."

17) *Ibid.*, p. 655. "Deformities, or Evidences of a Full Character." It seems likely that Chuang-tzu's vehicle in this passage is Confucius.

18) The necessary conjunction of the opposing conditions or events enumerated may still be reflected in Mao Tse-tung's essay, "On Contradiction," in which he comments upon the identity of opposites and says, "Without life, there would be no death; without death, there would also be no life. Without 'above', there would be no 'below'; without 'below', there would also be no 'above'. Without misfortune, there would be no good fortune; without good fortune, there would also be no misfortune." Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, New York: International Publishers, 1937-1938, v. 2, p. 43.

sea to the south sea. In his description of the relation of the rivers to the sea, like Koheleth's, all streams flow into the ocean, but the ocean never runs over.¹⁹⁾

At the same time, Koheleth stands in contrast to such Oriental thinkers in regard to other philosophical implications of the acceptance of opposites and the corners of life from which illustrative materials are chosen. In many respects Koheleth is unlike the early Taoists for whom opposites are surrounded by an aura of mystery and who insist on neatly tying opposites together as complements within a single pattern. Koheleth is willing to describe circumstances as he finds them, contrary to the Tao Te Ching which looks for hidden meanings within the situation. Koheleth's teachings take the form of simple worldly-wise observations, not mystical or mystifying reflections. Much of the Tao Te Ching is devoted to explaining variations of the paradoxical principle that to refrain from engaging in an action is a sure way to realize the intent of the action. Because some events actually are different than others, and because certain behavioral traits indeed are antithetical, the inconsistencies of existence are real to Koheleth. On account of man's distorted perception and the deceptive and illusory forms which experience takes, the world merely appears to be different than it is to the early, philosophically oriented Taoists.

Koheleth and the Tao Te Ching have little in common as to the source which should provide evidence of what opposites are like. Real life and the casual incidents which make up everyday experience supply the materials which Koheleth has at hand, whereas metaphysical abstractions, speculations about values, and spatial relationships comprise the grist in the mill for the Tao Te Ching. Koheleth creates an awareness of the experiences which regularly befall men, the troubles which are capable of interrupting their lives, and the toil at which they work during the course of their days. He has an ear for perplexing situations and episodes which could happen to anybody: What should you do in the presence of a king, particularly when confronting a difficult matter? Should you rush away or remain? What happens if you lose your wealth through some calamity,²⁰⁾ or your thankless children

19) Lin Yutang, *op. cit.*, pp. 686-7, 688, 638. "Autumn Floods."

20) *be'ineyān rāc* in 5:13 refers to a bad venture pointing to "some kind of calamity." See E. T. Ryder, "Ecclesiastes," *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, 1962, p. 463.

fail to appreciate you and you are without burial? Not only does Koheleth find evidence of opposites in the ordinary routine of daily life, but he chooses several examples from common chores in the household and the fields: planting and uprooting what has been planted, wrecking and rebuilding, keeping things and throwing them away, and tearing apart and sewing together. Even duties and responsibilities are assigned to certain times and seasons (2:18-23, 8:2-4, 10:4, 5:13-17, 6:3, 3:2b, 3b, 6b, 7a).

The Tao Te Ching prefers to stress metaphysical absolutes which are opposed to one another, such as what is and what is not; the document draws frequent analogies from spatial perception, citing degrees of length and height; it produces an impression of completeness, harmony, and sequence. Not ordinary things but abstractions are what count. What is significant is conceptualizing values and terms which are complementary. Whereas it is impossible to conceive of beauty without also thinking of ugliness, and considering that goodness is only present when evil is in attendance, the issue actually is whether any state of being logically requires the existence of its antithesis. Some characteristics come in pairs, where one defines another, like long and short, or where one term appears only by comparison with another, like high and low. Here is the way these elementary qualities are described in the Tao Te Ching:

Thus being and non-being grow out of each other,
Difficult and easy complete each other,
Long and short measure each other,
High and low lean on each other,
Voice and accompaniment harmonize with each other,
Front and back follow each other. ²¹⁾

Rarely does one see Koheleth engulfed in questions relating to being, completeness, and related concepts.

Koheleth and the Tao Te Ching give different interpretations of the meaning of sexual pleasure. From what Koheleth says, the relationship between a man and a woman is an experience of physical delight, whereas masculinity and femininity are complementary principles within human nature, in the Tao Te Ching. Koheleth advocates a life of mirth,

21) James W. Dye and William H. Forthman, Eds., *Religions of the World*. New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1967, p. 264. *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 2 (Constant C. C. Chang and William Forthman, Transs).

merriment, and happily wining and dining, since a person has nothing else to do but get as much enjoyment as possible from food, drink, and work while still being alive. Among the joyful experiences open to a man is the sharing of his life with a woman.

Enjoy life with the wife whom you love
All the days of your empty life,
Which he has given you under the sun;
All your empty life (9:9 AT).

Still, there are times for the act of marital intercourse and for abstaining from the act, times for embracing and for refraining (2:24-25, 3:12-13, 22, 5:18-19, 8:15, 9:7-9, 3:5).²²⁾ From the perspective of the Tao Te Ching, it does not suffice to say that sexual activity is pleasurable or that, in their love together, a man and a woman are fulfilled. Every person should evince both a masculine and a feminine nature, with the latter sustaining the former. One should be like a ravine or valley, testing all things which are received, or a womb, being passive and thereby acquiring a power which doesn't err. More than an object of desire, a woman is a symbol of wise conduct and the rule that, in being soft and weak, one becomes strong. The thoughtful individual within his own nature "knows the male, yet cleaves to what is female."²³⁾ Unlike Koheleth, the Tao Te Ching looks on maleness and femaleness as twin aspects of the self.

Both Koheleth and the Tao Te Ching sound deterministic. However, Koheleth's views are rigorous and unqualified, allowing few exceptions, whereas the Tao Te Ching acknowledges that people sometimes can change their situations, due to their capacity for thinking and acting. In the opinion of Koheleth, nature cannot operate otherwise than it does; things simply cannot be any different than they are; as far as human beings go, making changes is out of the question. To try to put a dent in reality or influence the forms and patterns which it possesses is futile and vaporous, adding up to zero.²⁴⁾ It is assumed that the

22) The expression in 3:5, *ʿēth lehāshelikk ʿavānim*, has sexual significance, and "a time to cast away stones" signifies the act of marital intercourse, according to the Midrash Qoheleth Rabbah. See Rankin, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

23) Arthur Waley, *The Way and Its Power*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1956, p. 178. *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter XXVIII.

24) H. L. Ginsberg, "Studies in Koheleth," *Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America*, vol. 17 (1950), 1-3. It should be added that, in 1:14 and throughout Koheleth, *hēvél*, "vapour," "vanity" or "futility," is linked consistently with *rûāh*, "breath" or "wind," and likely connotes "zero or 'nothing,'"

shapes which objects are given always will remain the same, with the result that it is impossible to uncurl things which are bent or make up what amounts to a deficit. Hence "the crooked cannot be made straight, and that which is lacking cannot be counted (1:15 AT)." Whether a person's life is blessed with success, with knowledge supplemented by riches, or whether one's fate turns from good fortune to distress, human effort cannot modify the work of God, and no man can take what God has formed crooked and succeed in straightening it. There is no meliorism here, no doctrine of improvability. The way deity orders affairs is final (1:14-15, 7:11-14).

In the reflective poems and practical teachings of the Tao Te Ching, however, this point of view is somewhat reversed. That which is crooked or bent becomes straight: that which is incomplete is made whole. Spared the fray of competition, the man who is crippled and the tree whose branches are crooked often survive their peers in full and complete lives.²⁵) It is obvious that people can change the shape their lives take and that the state of the mind is improved through attitudes of reticence and yieldingness. A person who does not boast can become successful: a person who is inconspicuous can be known everywhere. By not entertaining ambition, one acquires status. By not seeking the desired result, one achieves the objective. A part of the picture is reflected in these words: "The partial becomes complete; the crooked, straight; the empty, full; the worn out, new. He whose (desires) are few gets them; he whose (desires) are many goes astray."²⁶)

Several issues then are significant in the literature under discussion. They can be stated in the form of three questions: Are opposites identifiable in perplexing concrete events or paradoxical metaphysical states? Is sexuality a source of hedonistic delight or a clue to the meaning of the universe? Is it impossible or possible to ameliorate the human condition, to make the crooked straight? There is a marked difference between Koheleth's answers to the questions and the replies

in the sense of nothing lasting within an individual's experiences, rather than in an ontological manner.

25) Lin Yutang, *The Wisdom of Laotse*, New York: Random House, 1948, pp. 136, 139. The above interpretation of chapter 22 is suggested by parallel sayings of Chuang-tzu quoted by Yutang.

26) James Legge, Trans., *The Texts of Taoism*, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1962, Part I, p. 65. *Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 22.

of the Tao Te Ching. The Asian response is not the same. On each issue, Koheleth chooses the former alternative, while the early Taoists select the latter. On the last issue, both are fond of using the crooked-straight analogy, but Koheleth casts aside, while the early Taoists make room for, the likelihood of human improvement. Koheleth is concrete, hedonistic, and by no means a meliorist, whereas the documents of early Taoism present a mystical and metaphysical perspective with a bisexual view of human nature and an inclination towards meliorism.

Opposites in Koheleth and Greek Thought

Koheleth's distaste for undue speculation and the anti-metaphysical flavor of his words by now must be apparent. Any hidden meaning within nature cannot be discovered, inasmuch as the contour of ordinary physical events readily conceals whatever inner mystery there may be. Proceeding in spite of uncertainty, a man can do no more than accept events as and when they happen. A person only has to look to see that rain comes from clouds and a tree remains where it falls. At the same time, he cannot comprehend the work of the Maker any more than he can perceive how the embryo grows within the womb or discern which seeds in the earth will flourish (11:3-6).

Koheleth assumes that one opposite is associated, accompanied, or followed by another. There is no causal connection mentioned between two opposites themselves, although activities are set and prescribed by deity. As a case in point, a time for love is accompanied by a time for hate, and a time to wage war is succeeded by a time to seek peace (3:8). Neither is one state the same as its opposite, nor must it be transformed into its opposite. In spite of the fact that antitheses appear together, they do not necessarily generate each other, and the first does not have to be regarded as the father of the second. Accordingly, it is sufficient to realize, and it is no surprise that, where prosperity occurs, adversity often follows (7:14). A complex explanation is not imposed on this simple sequence. In Koheleth's attitude toward opposites, as in David Hume's view of all events in nature, no hidden link or necessary connection exists between them, and "we only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other."²⁷

²⁷) David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sect. VII, Pt. I. Charles W. Eliot, Ed., *The Harvard Classics*, New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1910, v. 37, p. 356.

In the picture of the world which Koheleth draws, nature and its processes are what really count: the sun ascending and descending, the wind blowing south and north, and the rivers flowing to the sea. The wind and the sea are not entities or things but processes which are continuously changing. The wind never lets up in making its rounds, and water keeps pouring into the ocean without ever filling it. These different forces of nature are independent of each other and are not said to interact together. No mingling or mixing of these processes occurs, and no process of nature is transformed into another. Even humanity is viewed dynamically, with new generations always emerging, in contrast to the sameness of earth. Absent is any substantive theory of mankind (1:4-7).

When the question of opposites is raised in Greek thought, emphasis is placed on the causal connection between members of a pair. In contrast to Koheleth's belief, one condition must generate or be transformed into its antithesis. Cases in point are Plato, a product of the Peloponnesian period, and Heraclitus before him, a witness to the end of the Persian wars. In the *Phaedo*, for example, Plato teaches that all opposites must come into being from each other in the vegetable world, the animal world, and mankind. The members of a pair engender each other in the cases of increasing and decreasing, separating and combining, cooling and heating, sleeping and waking, and living and being dead. Whether it be the transition of beautiful to ugly, just of unjust, smaller to bigger, stronger to weaker, or slower to faster, each relationship becomes the other relationship. If it were not for the cycle of opposites, nothing new would emerge, and everything eventually would reach the same state, a universal absence of life. However, what is dead springs from what is alive, while what is alive grows out of what is dead. Life generates death, and death in turn generates life after death.²⁸) Opposites are united in a pattern of reciprocal causation in Plato, whereas in Koheleth they are combined by association and the mere fact that one comes after another.

Although his attitudes likewise deviate from Koheleth's, Heraclitus further demonstrates the Greek preoccupation with the ambivalence of existence. Heraclitus insists on the identity of one state with its opposite, the mixing of the natural processes, and the equating of deity

28) Benjamin Jowett, Trans., *Dialogues of Plato*, New York: Random House, 1937, v. 1, pp. 453-456. *Phaedo*, 70-72.

with nature and human events. Two opposites are more than a pair, they comprise a harmonious whole. Summer and winter do not just succeed one another, but together they comprise a harmonious unit known as the year. Harmony is composed both of high tones and deep tones. Quite unlike Koheleth is the emphasis in Heraclitus on harmonious wholes and units. For Heraclitus, a quality is not said to have an opposite; it is the same as its opposite, being transformed into a contrary characteristic. That good and evil are the same can be seen from the fact that cutting and cauterizing sick men are beneficial for their diseases.²⁹⁾ "The way up and the way down are one and the same."³⁰⁾ In contrast to Koheleth, Heraclitus holds that the processes of nature are interdependent, mingle together, and are transformable from one form to the next. Fire changes into water and then into earth, while earth changes back to water and then into fire. Koheleth asserts that the activities in nature are prescribed by deity, whereas Heraclitus here states that such events comprise deity: "God is day, he is night; winter and summer, war and peace, satiety and hunger."³¹⁾

The medieval commentator Abraham Ibn Ezra suggested that in the passage 1: 2-11 Koheleth is referring to the Greek tetrad: earth, water, heat, and air.³²⁾ Unfortunately, Koheleth does not necessarily set forth these physical elements in the same way as Greek tradition. For example, Koheleth pictures such forces of nature as being independent of each other, while Heraclitus portrays the natural processes as interacting continuously. Nowhere in Koheleth does one find this opinion from Heraclitus: "For fire by contracting turns into moisture, and this condensing turns into water; water again when congealed turns into earth. This process he calls the downward path. Then again earth is liquefied, and thus gives rise to water, and from water the rest of the series is derived."³³⁾

Koheleth treats the forces of nature as different processes; Heraclitus maintains that one process is transmutable into another, just

29) Milton C. Nahm, *Selections from Early Greek Philosophy*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1964, pp. 70-72. *The fragments of Heraclitus*, 43-59.

30) *Ibid.*, p. 72. 69.

31) *Ibid.*, p. 70. 36.

32) Gordis, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-7.

33) R. D. Hicks, Trans., *Diogenes Laertius' Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950, v. II, p. 417. Bk IX, Chap. 1 Heraclitus, 9.

as Plato insists that one condition is convertible into its opposite. Often satisfied with a simple sequence, Kohleth sees little value in the principle of reciprocal causation between opposites, familiar in Greek thought. Unwilling to speculate on the inner meaning of the universe, Kohleth sticks to the task of describing natural events as they happen.

The Question of Semitic Antecedents

It can be argued that Kohleth's independence of Greek and Oriental answers stems from his ancient Semitic roots. It must be admitted that observations like Kohleth's are found in Babylonian wisdom literature, even as early as the Old Babylonian and Cassite periods. In both types of literature, the divine mind is described as being remote; the wicked are known to be praised improperly, in spite of the writer's displeasure; it is desirable to be alive and see the sun.³⁴⁾ Kohleth's tone is more moderate than that of the Dialogue of Pessimism. Kohleth urges the reader to eat, drink, and enjoy himself throughout life, acknowledging that such satisfaction becomes impossible during old age (2:24-26, 3:12-13, 5:18-20, 8:15, 12:1-8). The author of the Dialogue of Pessimism thinks that it is impossible to find happiness at any time, for no matter what one seeks to enjoy, the advantages are outweighed by the disadvantages. Whenever the master decides to pursue a course of action and the slave enumerates the desirable consequences, the master then changes his mind and the slave dutifully points to the undesirable consequences. Hunting, relaxing through repeated dining, loving a woman, and similar contemplated activities come under scrutiny during the conversation.³⁵⁾

In Kohleth as in the Gilgamesh Epic, the moral ideal is for the individual to enjoy a series of sensual pleasures in the present. To eat amply, have clean clothes, and enjoy one's spouse are among the ordinary satisfactions to experience. Kohleth expresses such hedonistic desires in the following passage:

34) Kohleth 7:23-4, 3:11, 8:17, 11:5; 8:10, 14; 11:7-8. *The Babylonian Theodicy*, ll. 256-7; ll. 267-274; *The Poem of The Righteous Sufferer*, ll. 31-2. W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960, pp. 87, 59.

35) *Ibid.*, pp. 145-9.

Go, eat your food with gladness,
 And drink your wine with a happy mind,
 For God has already accepted your deeds.
 At all times let your garments be white,
 And let not oil be lacking upon your head.
 Enjoy life with the wife whom you love (9: 7-9a AT).

The Gilgamesh Epic registers a similar selection of goals:

Thou, O Gilgamesh, let thy belly be full;
 Day and night be thou merry;
 Make every day (a day of) rejoicing.
 Day and night do thou dance and play.
 Let thy raiment be clean,
 Thy head be washed, (and) thyself be bathed in water.
 Cherish the little one holding thy hand,
 (And) let the wife rejoice in thy bosom.
 This is the lot of (mankind . . .).³⁶

Unmatched by Koheleth, the Gilgamesh Epic introduces a mythological explanation of why man's divinely assigned lot is to enjoy himself while being alive. The gods reserved life for themselves and death for mankind when they created the human race.

When it comes to Koheleth's understanding of opposites, however, he reveals few if any Semitic sources. Babylonian wisdom literature is largely irrelevant here, because its authors are not conversant with answers and solutions to the problem of opposites. They may know the problem exists, but make little attempt to grapple with it. The authors of Babylonian wisdom literature are aware of the ambivalent circumstances which people face, the contrast between the honest and the wicker, and the gap which separates the rich and the poor. Both the Poem of the Righteous Sufferer and the Babylonian *Theodicy* are familiar with the individual whose fortunes have been reversed from health and prosperity to illness and destitution. The author of the Dialogue of Pessimism knows that there are two sides to every question, whether the issue relates to dining, making loans, or being a public benefactor. The fable of the Ox and the Horse illustrates the complementary ways in which these animals function to serve human needs. Nevertheless, one looks in vain among the sages of Babylon for a list

36) Alexander Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967, p. 70. Tablet X, col. 3.

of the varieties of opposites, a suggestion as to why opposites occur, or some principles by which opposites are combined. What one does find in Babylonian wisdom literature is a tendency to emphasize and classify similarities rather than dissimilarities. It may be a group of maladies plaguing the individual, as in the Poem of the Righteous Sufferer, a number of occupations under the protective eye of deity, as in the Šamaš Hymn, or similar physiological drives and functions, as in the Dialogue of Pessimism.³⁷⁾ Contrariwise, Koheleth is at home with the fact of dissimilarities and spells out the variety of ways in which they are conceived to be related.

To return to the paper's initial questions, several conclusions can be drawn.

(1) The golden mean is merely an attitude expressing a dislike of extremes, not an exhaustive exposition of emotions, for Koheleth (7:16-18, 20). Koheleth is occupied with things to be avoided rather than the course lying between extremes, whereas Aristotle is absorbed with both issues and provides ample analogies for aiming at the mean or, to cite one example, finding a circle's center. Given Koheleth's frame of reference, it is clear that vice is an excess of righteousness or of wickedness but not of feeling or sentiment, as Aristotle's definition would have it. In fact, Koheleth makes a point of preferring some excesses of feeling to others and more particularly sorrow to laughter (7:3). The two moralists have little in common when examined closely.

(2) In Koheleth's doctrine of opposites, there is a fourfold formula by which opposites are combined, involving several relationships, of which the golden mean is one. There is a variety of logical patterns by which circumstances are paired, including but not confined to the "both-and" and "neither-nor" principles. (a) Of two opposing events, the last is preferable to the first, where the end matters more than the beginning, as in the superior significance of death compared to birth (7:1-2, 8). (b) Where two qualities are coupled, because they contribute to the individual's survival, both are regarded as desirable, as in the case of knowledge and wealth (7:11-12). (c) Where two circumstances occur, one often cancels its rival, with the day of prosperity offset by the day of adversity, and the meaning of the future thereby concealed (7:14). (d) Of the two extremes, excessive righteous-

37) Lambert, *op. cit.*, p. 41 (ll. 49-53), p. 135 (ll. 136-144), p. 145 (l. 16).

ness and excessive wickedness, neither trait is deemed worth having, feasible, or extending the individual's lifetime. What is worth seeking is the mean itself or an antipathy toward extremes (7:16-17, 20).

(3) Being deterministic, Koheleth discovers that the shifting physical forces in the universe, the antithetical events comprising the flow of human existence, and the high and low points of men's fortunes and emotions follow a prescribed course of their own. In Oriental thought, the early, philosophically oriented Taoists also perceive that the fluctuations within human moods and the alterations of men's experiences and fortunes are divinely predetermined and, like Koheleth, that all streams pour into an ocean which never runs over. However, on the matter of perceiving opposites, Koheleth regards the inconsistencies of existence as real, finds evidence of opposites in ordinary things and casual episodes which can happen to anyone, looks with pleasure on the relations between a man and a woman, and rules out any chance of improving the human situation or making the crooked straight. To the contrary, the early Taoists seek hidden meanings explaining man's illusory and contradictory impressions, emphasize abstractions and metaphysical absolutes which are opposed to each other, view masculinity and femininity as complementary aspects of the self, and allow the crooked to become straight and people to change the shape of their lives. Apart from his deterministic assumptions and use of the "stream-ocean" and "crooked-straight" symbolism, Koheleth pursues a different path than the Asian thinkers under discussion, by appealing to ordinarieness and concreteness and by picturing the diverse and contradictory aspects of existence as they are.

(4) According to Koheleth's view of nature, the different processes of nature are continuously changing and independent of each other; where opposites occur, they are coupled in simple sequences, with one accompanying or following another; man cannot discover any hidden meaning within the physical universe. Opposites do not generate each other, are not transformed into each other, and do not illustrate the principle of reciprocal causation, as in Plato. The processes of nature are not portrayed as interdependent, do not mingle together, and never change in form from one physical element to the next, as in **Heraclitus**. Although Koheleth's reference in 1:2-11 to the earth, sun, wind, and sea brings to mind the familiar Greek tetrad of the earth, air, fire, and water, there is little resemblance beyond this point. When Koheleth

looks at nature, he describes it simply and its processes as being external, real, and independent of each other.

(5) As for ethics, Koheleth acknowledges that, while the divine mind is remote, the experience of pleasure is immediate. Not only is it desirable to be alive and see the sun, but it is important to eat, drink, and enjoy other sensual pleasures now. Semitic antecedents to each of these sentiments may be attributed to the Babylonian Theodicy, the Poem of the Righteous Sufferer, and the Gilgamesh Epic. At the same time, there is little effort by Babylonian wisdom writers to come to grips with the basic question of opposites, what they are, or how they are combined. Rather, there is tendency for these writers to be occupied with similarities more than dissimilarities, whether among maladies, occupations, or human drives. With an ear for ambiguity, Koheleth subtly and independently probes diverse ways of joining contrary traits and events.

Koheleth is reflecting on problems which are being raised in different parts of the world during the fifth, fourth, and third centuries B.C. He is as convinced of the ambiguous and inconsistent character of existence as the early, philosophically oriented Taoists in Asia and Plato and Heraclitus in the thought of Greece. All are engrossed with the identification, relationship, and meaning of opposites as well as the events, natural processes, and human traits in which opposites are found. At the same time, Koheleth is independent of other traditions in the answers which he provides. He does not fit opposites together in a neat complete pattern, join them by an inner mystical cord, or assemble them within some comprehensive scheme. He does not regard the natural processes as interacting or mutually begetting one another. Alien to Koheleth are these responses by fluxionist thinkers in the Orient and Greece. Actually, Koheleth approaches the subject of opposites with a simple logic in which both options may be desirable, neither may be desirable, one may be preferable to the other, or one may cancel the other. He views relationships in nature externally rather than internally, physical forces as independent processes, and the ordinariness of life without pretense.

ASPECTS OF THE ORIGIN OF THE BUDDHIST TRADITION IN TIBET

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It is a remarkable paradox that there is no word in Tibetan for "Buddhism", in spite of the fact that the Tibetans—at least up to the Chinese occupation of their country in the 1950's—have preserved a Buddhist culture which to all intents and purposes has remained uninfluenced by the European presence in Asia.

Tibetans do not think of themselves as "Buddhist"—they are either *chos-pa*, "followers of *chos*", or *bon-po*, "followers of *bon*". The *chos-pa*, who are divided into a number of separate schools or traditions, of which the Gelugpa, the Kagyutpa, the Sakyapa and the Nyingmapa represent the major divisions¹⁾, constitute the vast majority of the population. The *bon-po* were, at least in recent times, a relatively small minority. Exactly how small the minority was, we have no means of saying to-day²⁾. In all probability it was—particularly in Amdo, in Kham, and in the Himalayan regions—far from negligible. Even in Central Tibet, the very centre of Gelugpa orthodoxy, the *bon-pos* had monasteries with several hundred monks³⁾.

1) For an up-to-date appraisal of these schools and their characteristic teachings, see G. Tucci *Die Religionen Tibets*, vol. 20 of *Die Religionen der Menschheit*, Stuttgart 1970, p. 47-58 and p. 62-127.

2) Information contained in European sources regarding the geographical distribution of the *bon-pos* in Tibet has been summarized by H. Hoffmann *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon-Religion*, Wiesbaden 1950, p. 236-243. Information obtained from *bon-po* refugees in India makes it clear that this summary, though the best that could be made at the time, by no means gives an adequate picture of the actual number of monasteries etc.

3) The most important were *g-Yuñ-druñ-gliñ* and *sMan-ri*, both in the province of *gCañ*. They are marked on the map on p. 283 of *A Cultural History of Tibet* by D. Snellgrove and H. Richardson, London 1968. *sMan-ri* is described in my article "Remarques sur l'administration d'un monastère bonpo" to appear shortly in *Journal Asiatique*.

What, then, is the difference between a bon-po and a čhos-pa? And what are the relations of both to Indian religion, to Buddhism, to dharma? This is the problem towards the solution of which I hope to contribute in this article. The literary sources at our disposal are of two kinds:

1. Manuscripts, of religious as well as purely secular contents, written in an archaic form of Tibetan and discovered at the turn of the century in one of the chambers, walled up in or about 1035 A.D., in the cave temples at Tun-huang in North-west China.

2. Lamaist literature, philosophical as well as historical, composed by bon-pos as well as čhos-pas; that which has been preserved does not seem to have been written before c. 1000 A.D. although it clearly also includes traditions which are considerably older.

Taken as a whole, our sources represent a vast literature which has so far been only partially explored and utilized. Further, new texts are constantly being discovered among the Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal. These refugees—and among them are many hundred adherents of bon—in themselves represent a rich field of research for those wishing to study Tibetan religion; but there is no time to be lost—traditional social and religious patterns are already rapidly disintegrating.

The following is based partly on a study of the relevant Tibetan texts, partly on conversation and study with bon-po monks, in particular the learned abbot, Sangye Tenzin Jongdong who since 1968 has been the abbot of the newly founded bon-po monastery in India.

Followers of čhos as well as of bon designate themselves—and each other—as nañ-pa, “insiders”, in contrast to all foreigners (Indians, Chinese, Europeans) who are phyi-pa, “outsiders”⁴). The occasional Christian or Muslim Tibetan is likewise phyi-pa. If there is a word in Tibetan for “Buddhist”, it is nañ-pa, which, as we have seen, also includes bon-pos⁵). Even the most cursory examining of bon-po literature makes it abundantly clear that it is a genuine Buddhist literature; bon-po monks, as anyone who has lived with them can attest, are Buddhist, and have the same patterns of faith, study, and monastic life as čhos-pa monks⁶). Adherents of čhos as well as of bon call the

4) Presumably a Mongolian Buddhist is also reckoned as nañ-pa. Of other Buddhists, the Tibetans have had practically no knowledge.

5) That nañ-pa also includes bon-pos, is confirmed by R. B. Ekvall *Religious Observances in Tibet*, Chicago 1964, p. 23.

6) Those who have, like the present writer, been in close contact with bon-po

founder of their religion Sañs-rgyas, i.e. Buddha, and they strive—using identical means—to attain byañ-čhub, “Awakening” (sc. bodhi). An investigation of čhos and bon in the form they still exist as living traditions can only lead to the conclusion that both are “Buddhist”—or, since we are dealing with Tibetan culture, “lamaist” 7).

However, the problem is not so simple as these preliminary remarks may seem to indicate. If “Buddha” is understood as the historical figure Śākyamuni who lived in Northern India in the 5th century B.C., the bon-pos are not—neither in their own eyes nor in those of other Tibetans—“Buddhists”; or rather, the bon-pos are—but then only in their own eyes—the *only true* Buddhists. For who was Buddha? Buddha was known in the world as sTon-pa gŠen-rab, “The Teacher Shen-rab”, and his biography is to be found, as any bon-po knows, in the two volumes of “gZer-mig” 8). sTon-pa gŠen-rab lived in the country of sTag-gzig which is generally placed rather vaguely somewhere to the west or north-west of Tibet 9), and, according to the bon-po scholar Ņi-ma bstan-’jin (b. 1813), he was born (reckoning from 1961) 17.977 years ago 10). The same author places the birth of Sid-

monks, can testify that these monks often combine remarkable learning with a genuinely Buddhist ethos. “Educated *bonpo* monks are brought up in the *dGe-lugs-pa* (“Yellow Hat”) Way, trained in conventional Buddhist philosophy and logic and receiving after examination and debate the academic degree of *dGe-bšes*”. (Snellgrove, *The Nine Ways of Bon*, London 1967, p. 2).

7) This fact has been strongly underlined by Dr. Snellgrove throughout the above-mentioned volume. My conclusions in this respect, although identical with Dr. Snellgrove’s, have been reached independently of him.

8) The first seven of the eighteen chapters of “gZer-mig” have been published and translated by A. H. Francke in *Asia Major* 1924, 1926, 1927, 1930 and 1939. The contents of the whole book have been summarized by H. Hoffmann *The Religions of Tibet*, London 1961, p. 85-96.

9) It is not necessary to enter into a detailed discussion of the various “holy countries” of the bon-pos such as Žaň-žuň, ’Ol-mo luň-riň and sTag-gzig. In the fully elaborated tradition, as illustrated by two folding maps in *Tibetan Žang Žung Dictionary*, published by the Bonpo Foundation, Delhi 1965 (Lahore Press), three such “holy countries” are described; of these the two first would seem to be purely mythical, while the third is placed in Northern Tibet: 1) “The cave of Žaň-žuň (i.e. Inner Žaň-žuň, also called rTag-gzigs (or) ’Ol(-mo luň-riň))” 2) “Central Žaň-žuň”, to the south of which lies 3) “The Door of Žaň-žuň” (i.e. “Outer Žaň-žuň”).

10) See my article “A Chronological Table of the Bon-po: The *bstan rcis* of Ņi-ma bstan-’jin” in *Acta Orientalia* (Copenhagen), vol. 33. Ņi-ma bstan-’jin’s work will be referred to hereafter as “bsTan-rcis” followed by the number of the relevant paragraph.

dhārtha Gautama in 960 B.C.—much too early, of course, but nevertheless within a reasonable historical perspective¹¹). It is further stated that the doctrine of gŠen-rab will last for 12.023 years (again reckoning from 1961), while that of Šākyamuni will only last for 2159 years¹²).

The bon-pos consequently deny that Buddhism in their sense of the word reached Tibet from India. On the contrary, it was brought by gŠen-rab from sTag-gzig to the country of Žaṅ-žuṅ¹³). This country is generally placed in Northern or North-Western Tibet, and would seem to have included the area surrounding Mount Kailāsa¹⁴). From Žaṅ-žuṅ the Doctrine was brought to Tibet and the holy texts translated from the language of Žaṅ-žuṅ.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to deal with the question of the “language of Žaṅ-žuṅ”. It is well-known that the holy texts of the čhos-pa have been translated from Sanscrit or Chinese and that they are prefaced by the title in the language in question transcribed in Tibetan characters. In the same way, the holy books of the bon-pos commence with a title which is generally stated to be “in the language of Žaṅ-žuṅ”. The authenticity of such language was formerly occasionally questioned¹⁵), and it has been suspected of being a pious fabrication intended to take the place of Sanscrit. The problem is further complicated by the fact that certain other “languages” have the same function: “The Heavenly Language of sTag-gzig”, “The Language of the Svastika-Gods”, etc. Further, one of the čhos-pa schools, the Nying-mapa, has at least two “languages” of the same kind: the language “of U-rgyan”, and the language “of Bru-ša”. While there can be little doubt that these “languages” are, in fact, fabrications (this does not, of course, prevent them from forming coherent systems of syllabic symbols), it

11) bsTan-rcis 38. His nirvāṇa is placed in 880 B.C. It is worth noting that he is never referred to as “Buddha”, but as “Šākyamuni”.

12) Id. 230.

13) See Snellgrove *Nine Ways*, p. 14.

14) See Hoffmann “Zur Literatur der Bon-po”, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (ZDMG)* vol. 94, p. 169-188; id. *Quellen*, p. 212-213; R. A. Stein *La civilisation tibétaine*, Paris 1962, p. 16.

15) For instance by Hoffmann in “Zur Literatur der Bon-po”, where he does, however, not exclude the possibility of some texts being authentic translations. Stein, too, speaks of titles in the idiom “of Bru-ša” or Žaṅ-žuṅ as “pious reconstructions” (*Civilisation*, p. 200). However, in the article “Žaṅ-žuṅ: the Holy Language of the Tibetan Bon-po” (*ZDMG* 1967, p. 376-381), Professor Hoffmann concludes, on the basis of the same material as Dr. Haarh, that we are dealing with an authentic language.

would seem that there can no longer be serious doubt that Buddhist texts have, in fact, existed in the language of Žaň-žuň. That Žaň-žuň actually existed as a non-Tibetan country at the time of the emergence of the Tibetan national dynasty (7th cent. A.D.), is an established fact—it is mentioned often enough in the historical texts discovered at Tun-huang¹⁶). A text, identified as a medical text, written in what apparently is the Žaň-žuň language, has even been found at Tun-huang¹⁷). However, we now possess a bilingual, Žaň-žuň/Tibetan text, “mJod-phug” (“Treasure-Cave”), with a commentary by *Dran-pa nam-mkha*’, a bon-po siddha (tantric adept) who lived in the 8th century¹⁸). We further possess a collection of quotations and shorter passages in the Žaň-žuň language¹⁹) which have been thoroughly analysed by Dr. Eric Haarh²⁰). Dr. Haarh concludes that the language of Žaň-žuň “belongs to the West Tibetan languages, most probably among the complex Pronominalized dialects of the Western group, following the terminology of the Linguistic Survey of India”²¹). In other words, it is related to a number of languages spoken to-day in the Western Himalayas, and Dr. Haarh has established identity between the numerals as well as many syntactic particles in these languages and the language of Žaň-žuň. During a short visit to Himachal Pradesh in 1970 I was able to collect further material from a speaker of Kanauri, one of the languages in question, and one is undeniably surprised when one hears Žaň-žuň words used as the most natural thing in the world. Of the numerous examples I collected, I shall only give one: “god” is in Žaň-žuň *sad*²²)—and in Kanauri *sät*!

16) See Bacot, Thomas and Toussaint “Documents de Touen-Houang relatifs à l'histoire du Tibet”, *Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'études*, 51, Paris 1940-46, passim.

17) F. W. Thomas “Žaň-žuň Language”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1933, p. 405-410. Edited in *Asia Major*, vol. 13, 1967, p. 211-217.

18) *mDzod phug: Basic Verses and Commentary* by *Dran pa nam mkha*’, published by Tenzin Namdak, Delhi 1966.

19) In the *Zang žung Tibetan Dictionary*, see n. 9.

20) “The Zhang-zhung Language. A Grammar and Dictionary of the Unexplored Language of the Tibetan Bonpos”, *Acta Jutlandica* XL: 1, Aarhus 1968. See also *The Yar-lui Dynasty*, Copenhagen 1969, p. 445 n. 38.

21) “The Zhang-zhung Language” p. 26.

22) Id. p. 42. We also find the word in the name of a bon-po siddha, the existence of whom we have no reason to doubt, namely Sad-ne-ga’u. (See my *Bon-po Studies: The Akhrid-System of Meditation*, Oslo 1969 and New Delhi 1971, index).

However, we must continue. Our bon-po sources claim that the doctrine of the Buddha (gŠen-rab) was firmly established in Tibet when čhos appeared; and the undeniable fact that čhos gradually supplanted bon is stated to be the result of curses uttered in former times by certain demons. Ņi-ma bstan-'jin gives the following account:

"In the Earth-Ox Year (749 A.D.), the perverse prayer of a demon (being the ultimate cause), and he who acted like a monk but retained the Five Poisons (Ignorance, Lust, Hate etc.—Śāntarakṣita is referred to) providing the immediate cause of the (appearing of the) pernicious Buddhist (i.e. čhos-pa) monks, a demon having entered the heart of the king and the merit of the realm of Tibet being low, the time came when the sun of the Doctrine was made to set" ²³⁾.

It is indeed startling to see the appearance of čhos described as a catastrophe by an author who is in every other respect profoundly Buddhist!

The matter is further complicated by the fact that the Tun-Huang texts as well as later literary sources are unanimous in stating that both before and after the establishment of the national dynasty (7th century) there existed a class of priests called bon-pos. Judging from the Tun-Huang texts, there would not seem to be anything Buddhist about these priests; one of their main functions seems to have been to perform the burial of and to carry out the cult connected with the dead kings ²⁴⁾. We know that Buddhism, called čhos, was protected by the royal house and was established only after a bitter political struggle with the indigenous priests, including a class of priests called bon-pos, supported by powerful aristocratic families ²⁵⁾. As a result of this struggle, the royal dynasty was brought to an end, and the country was plunged into a state of chaos which lasted until the emergence around 1000 A.D. of a politically powerful čhos-pa hierarchy connected with large monastic centres. As I have shown elsewhere ²⁶⁾, it is during this period that we find the formation of an organised tradition whose followers call themselves bon-po, but who are manifestly Buddhist. Like certain čhos-pa traditions, e.g. the Kagyutpa, it was not monastic at the outset, but

23) bsTan-rcis, 55.

24) See e.g. M. Lalou "Rituel Bon-po des Funérailles Royales", *Journal Asiatique*, vol. CCXL/3, 1952, p. 339-362. See also Haarh *The Yar-lun Dynasty*, passim.

25) This struggle has been described by Hoffmann *Religions of Tibet*, p. 66-83.

26) *Bonpo Studies*, part I.

rapidly became so ²⁷). This tradition continued without interruption up to the Tibetan bon-pos of to-day.

It has often been supposed that the lamaist bon-pos of to-day represent a profound assimilation of Buddhist i.e. čhos-pa, traditions, and that their origins are to be found with the pre-Buddhist bon-po priests. According to this theory, the bon-po priests, being unable to compete with the intellectually more sophisticated Buddhist monks, plagiarized Buddhist texts and copied Buddhist rituals as best they could. This point of view has been adopted by Professor Hoffmann in *The Religions of Tibet* (London 1961):

“The Bon religion, which was originally the national Tibetan version of North and Central Asian Shamanism and Animism, developed in Western Tibet, and particularly in Zhang-zhung; certainly under the influence of Buddhism and probably also under the influence of Persian and Manichaean teachings, into a syncretist system with a developed doctrine and a sacred literature” (p. 84).

And further:

“Lamaist authors never cease to insist that... Bon priests took Buddhist texts, merely making minor alterations in the names of persons and places, sometimes even turning the religious teachings in them into their own... Our own observations... suggest that there is some justification of the Buddhist charges of plagiarism” (p. 108).

Speaking of the revival of Buddhism in Central Tibet after the collapse of the national dynasty, Professor Hoffmann states that

“a development began which brought the Bon religion closer and closer to Lamaism. The original religious fund from Zhang-zhung was now supplemented by a growing stream of newly borrowed teachings so that gradually the Bon priests were in a position to offer their followers all that Buddhism could” (p. 97).

If we accept Professor Hoffmann's interpretation of bon, we can divide its development into three stages:

1. a primitive animist-shamanist popular religion;

²⁷) sMan-ri was founded in 1405 (bsTan-rcis 129); the temple (Snellgrove translates “Academy”, *Nine Ways*, p. 4 n. 4) (gcug-lag-khañ) of Dar-Idiñ gser-sgo was founded in 1173 (bsTan-rcis 103). The monasteries of kLu-brag and bSam-gliñ were founded in the 13th century (Snellgrove, loc. cit.), while the monastery of g-Yas-ru dBen-sa-kha was founded by Bru-čhen rGyal-ba g-yuñ-druñ in 1072 (bsTan-rcis 83).

2. a gradual assimilation to Buddhism and incorporation of Gnostic-Buddhist syncreticism from *Žaṅ-žuṅ*;
3. complete assimilation to Buddhism after the collapse of the dynasty, resulting in the modern bon-po tradition.

This interpretation is, in fact, derived from chapter 8 of the “Crystal Mirror of Doctrinal Systems”²⁸), a rather polemical Gelugpa, hence *chos-pa*, text written by the abbot Thu-kvan bLo-bzaṅ čhos-kyi ṅi-ma (1737-1802). This author, who gives a brief and interesting, but in many respects quite misleading presentation of bon-po doctrines with which it is not likely that he was truly familiar, divides the development of bon into what amounts to precisely the three above-mentioned stages, namely “original bon”, “erring bon”, and “transformed bon”²⁹).

Professor Hoffmann claims that after their assimilation of Buddhism,

“the later Bon-po led an isolated existence apart from the main stream of spiritual development as as discarded heretical sect, as a provincial tendency in religious belief whose main tendency was and still is a purely negative one, namely anti-Buddhism” (p. 74).

And he continues:

“But all this developed in an atmosphere of hostility to Buddhism. Just as the mediaeval Satanist desecrated the Host, so the Bon-po turn their sacred objects not in a dextral but in a sinister fashion... The Bon religion had become ossified as a heresy, and its essence lay largely in contradiction and negation” (p. 98).

Whatever the historical origins of bon may be, Professor Hoffmann’s description of bon as a living tradition, and in particular his comparison of bon, which claims to be the pure and original doctrine of the Buddha, with “the mediaeval Satanist” whose essence indeed lay “in contradiction and negation”, is as misleading as it could possibly be. However, his description has been accepted and even quoted by other scholars, e.g. R. Ekvall who speaks of “wilful distortion of perversion of Buddhist ritual”, “circumambulation in the same perversely contradictory manner”, “deep antagonism which finds expression in reversal and contradiction”, etc.³⁰).

28) Grub-mtha’ šel-gyi me-loṅ of which *Quellen zur Geschichte* contains the translation (p. 328-338) and text (p. 415-419) of chapter 8.

29) ’Jol-bon (wrongly for rdol-bon), ’khyar-bon, bsgyur-bon.

30) Ekvall, *Religious Observances*, p. 22-23.

The bon-po attitude is, in fact, the very opposite of that evoked by Hoffmann and Ekvall. This can be stated not only on the basis of prolonged personal contact with bon-pos, both monks and laymen, but also on the basis of bon-po texts of all kinds, texts which, it is only fair to add, were not available when Hoffmann wrote his study of Bon. It is, of course, true that these texts contain much material that is not Buddhist; the same, however, is equally true of čhos-pa texts. What does strike one on encountering bon-po monks is not their familiarity with pre-Buddhist ideas and practices—if this is what one seeks, one will indeed be disappointed—but an exceptional willingness to learn and study teachings of other traditions, to which they usually feel superior, though not hostile.

As Professor Snellgrove aptly remarks ³¹⁾:

“Western scholars of Tibetan well know how difficult it is to persuade an indigenous Tibetan scholar to take any interest in forms of Tibetan literature that lie outside his particular school. Normally a *dGe-lugs-pa* (“Yellow Hat”) scholar would be ashamed at the idea of reading a work of any other Tibetan Buddhist order, let alone a *bonpo* work. Yet educated *bonpo* monks clearly have no such inhibitions. They will learn wherever they can, and given time they will absorb and readapt what they have learned”.

While it is true that bon-po monasteries have occasionally been burnt and followers of bon persecuted ³²⁾, the same is true of other traditions as well, the best-known example being the ʃo-nañ-pas whose monasteries were all forcibly closed down in the 17th century by the 5th Dalai Lama ³³⁾. On the other hand, relations have by no means always been hostile between bon-pos and čhos-pas. The ties between bon-pos and Nyingmapas have been particularly close; as I have shown elsewhere, several historical figures play an important part in both sects ³⁴⁾. This is not surprising in view of the great doctrinal similarities of the two schools. Further facts pointing to a striking lack of hostility between čhos and bon can be mentioned. A highly interesting encyclopaedic work of the 15th century, recently published in India, the “bšad-mjod

31) *Nine Ways*, p. 13.

32) Hoffmann *The Religions of Tibet*, p. 99-100; *Quellen*, p. 242.

33) Hoffmann *The Religions of Tibet*, p. 140.

34) *Bonpo Studies*, Introduction.

yid-bžin nor-bu” by Don-dam smra-ba’i senge, exhibits a remarkably dispassionate approach to bon as well as čhos. Gene Smith states:

“The author of the *Bśad mdzod* represents an interesting eclectic tradition of Buddhism and Bon. Both are treated impartially, almost as two aspects of an identical religion”³⁵).

The same attitude, perhaps even more explicitly stated, is manifest in a short text in my possession written by the bon-po monk lDoñ-bcuñ bZod-pa rgyal-mchan (b. 1866), who treats bon and čhos on a strictly, even pedantically, equal footing, constantly stressing the need for bon-pos “to delight in bon” and čhos-pas “to delight in čhos”³⁶).

A closer investigation of the etymology of the word “bon” will be useful at this stage. Recent research³⁷) indicates that we are dealing with two homonyms “bon” meaning a) “invoker” or “to invoke”, related to ’bod-pa “to invoke, to invite”, and b) “seed”, related to sa-bon “seed”, ’bo-ba “pour out”, Lepcha bon-na “drip”. *Bon* is further glossed by the Žaň-žuiñ term *gyer* which means “chant” and is used in the sense of “chant”, not only in bon-po, but even in čhos-pa texts³⁸). A bon-po, then, is, according to etymology a) an „invoker (of the gods)”, hence “one who chants”. Etymology b) is perhaps to be related to the variant form Bon, found in Tun-huang manuscripts³⁹), of the more usual Bod, “Tibet”; thus bon may also be taken to mean “the autochthonous Tibetan religion” and as such contrasted to čhos which was imported from India and China.

Consequently, a bon-po in pre-Buddhist times may be regarded as an

35) Introduction, p. 10 of *A 15th Century Tibetan Compendium of Knowledge, the Bśad mdzod yid bzhiñ nor bu by Don-dam-smra-ba’i-senge*. Edited by Lokesh Candra with an introduction by E. Gene Smith, *Satapiṭaka Series* vol. 78, New Delhi 1969.

36) MS copy belonging to Sans-rgyas bstan-’jin l’Jon-l’doñ of “Drañ-sroñ bZod-pa rgyal-mchan gyi luñ-yig”. His date of birth is given in bsTan-rcis 209.

37) W. Simon “A Note on Tibetan Bon”, *Asia Major* vol. 5, 1956 p. 5-8; G. Uray “The Old Tibetan Verb Bon”, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 17, 1964 p. 324-334; Snellgrove *Nine Ways*, p. 1 n. 1, p. 20 n. 2.

38) For *gyer*, see Haahr “The Zhang-zhung Language” p. 30. For the use of *gyer* in the sense of “chant” see e.g. *bśad-mjod* (f. n. 35), p. 456: lus-kyi sgo-nas sgom pa yin/ñag-gi sgo-nas *gyer*-ba yin/yid-kyi sgo-nas bsam-pa yin/.

39) See M. Lalou “Tibetain Ancien BOD/BON”, *Journal Asiatique* 1953, p. 275-276. That “Bon” is an authentic variant of Bod is confirmed by the Chinese rendering of “Tibet”, viz. Fan (<*_{cb}ei^wen). See B. Karlgren *Analytical Dictionary of Chinese and Sino-Japanese*, Paris 1923, p. 22.

“invoker”, a particular type of priest among several others. The Tun-Huang texts mention different kinds of bon-pos: bon-pos of gods, of humans, of horses, of magic, of heaven, of the created world, of the paternal clan, of burials etc.—presumably these terms designate various specialists. Other classifications employ names of different clans: Se-bon, rMa-bon etc., or countries: rGya-bon, lDam-bon etc. 40).

Other priests, too, are mentioned, particularly the various classes of *gšen*. This word has been translated by Professor Hoffmann as “shaman” 41), which is, to say the least, misleading; the pre-Buddhist religion in Tibet may perhaps have contained elements which can be called “shamanist”, but if we take this religion as a whole, “shamanist” will be seen to be a much too narrow characterization. Snellgrove’s translation “sacrificer” 42) is much more to the point, as the specific function of the *gšen*-priests seems to have been to perform sacrifices. The *gšen*-priests, too, are classified in various ways.

Bon-priests, then, are part of the religious scene in Tibet before the official introduction of Buddhism in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. Not all bon-pos, however, were native Tibetans. On the contrary, our *chos-pa* sources inform us that bon-pos were invited to Tibet from neighbouring countries. Thus “The Report of the King”, a text of the 14th century, (which purports to contain re-discovered texts, *gter-ma*, hidden in the 9th century), states that at the death of King Gri-gum bcan-po, the first king to leave his body on earth (his predecessors had ascended bodily to heaven by means of a rope), no-one in Tibet knew how to perform the burial, and bon-pos from Ta-zig and 'A-ža were invited to perform the proper rituals 43).

Ta-zig indicates, rather vaguely, Iran; 'A-ža generally indicates Turco-Mongolian tribes of the Kokonor-region. However, as regards 'A-ža, it is possible that the author of “The Report of the King” has preserved a tradition which is at fault; for a whole series of other sources all manifestly place the country of origin of the foreign bon-pos to the West and North-west of Tibet. dPa'-bo gCug-lag 'phreñ-ba, an historian of the 16th century, states that a “heretic” (*mu-steg-pa*) from

40) Stein, op. cit., p. 195.

41) “Gšen, Eine Lexicographisch-religionswissenschaftliche Untersuchung”, *ZDMG* 1944, p. 340 ff.; *Quellen*, p. 207.

42) Snellgrove and Richardson *A Cultural History*, p. 52.

43) Hoffmann *Quellen*, p. 246 and 346; Haahr *The Yar-luñ Dynasty* p. 100.

the land of Gurṇavatra on the border between India and sTag-gzig was invited:

“At that time, from the country called Gurnavatra on the border between India and sTag-gzig, came a heretic, a bon-po by name of 'A-ža. He flew in the sky and uttered prophecies. On wood he skinned the hide; on stone he ripped open the quartered parts. With meat and wine he performed offerings to the demons incessantly” 44).

Another chronicle, written by the 5th Dalai Lama in the 17th century, states that in order to perform the burial of Gri-gum bcad-po, gšen-priests were invited from Žaṅ-žuṅ and Bru-ša 45). Žaṅ-žuṅ is, as we know, placed to the west of Tibet; so is Bru-ša, which is identified with the present district of Gilgit.

A third chronicle, the “Crystal Mirror of Doctrinal Systems” of Čhos-kyi ṅi-ma, asserts that at the same occasion bon-pos were invited from Kashmir (Kha-čhe), Gilgit (Bru-ša) and Žaṅ-žuṅ 46).

In other words, there is a high degree of consensus in čhos-pa texts that bon came to Tibet from the Indo-Iranian frontier districts. It is perhaps worth noting that dPa'-bo glug-lag 'phreṅ-ba describes the bon-po from Gurṇavatra as a mu-steg-pa; this word is used in Tibetan to designate the hinduists, the heretics par excellence. His description of the bon-po, moreover, immediately suggests a tantric adept of the “left-handed” (vāmācāra) type or Śaiva yogin of the aghori-type. Čhos-kyi ṅi-ma supports our impression in stating that the bon-doctrines introduced in Tibet by the bon-pos from Kashmir etc. are said to contain Śivaist doctrines 47) and that the third and final stage in the development of bon was introduced when “a paṇḍita (i.e. an Indian) dressed in a blue robe hid heretical texts 48) as a “treasure” and thereafter himself found them and mixed them with bon” 49).

It is, of course, possible that the strictly orthodox Čhos-kyi ṅi-ma has only wanted to discredit contemporary bon-pos by alleging that their teaching contained doctrines fabricated by a Śivaist. However, it is equally possible that he has preserved an ancient tradition which contains a core of historical fact. Kashmir was a flourishing centre of

44) Haarh, p. 101-102.

45) Hoffmann *Quellen*, p. 316 and 409; Haarh, p. 101.

46) Hoffmann *Quellen*, p. 330 and 416; Haarh, p. 113.

47) Hoffmann *Quellen*, p. 331 and 416 (mu-stegs dbaṅ-phyug pa'i grub-mtha').

48) čhos-log.

49) Hoffmann *Quellen*, p. 331 and 416.

Śaivism as well as of Buddhist tantrism, and tantrists, both in India ⁵⁰⁾ and Tibet, have traditionally been clothed in blue.

However, the problem is further complicated by the presence of two other traditions, both preceding čhos (in the sense of “Buddhism”) in Tibet, namely *sgruñ*, “stories” and *lde’u*, “riddles” ⁵¹⁾.

According to the “Report of the King”, the reign of the first Tibetan king was characterized by “sacred conventions” (*lha-yi čhos-lugs*) ⁵²⁾, *sgruñ* and *lde’u*. It was only several generations later that the first bon-pos were invited to Tibet; they enjoyed royal patronage and were presumably regarded as part of “sacred conventions”, for in other texts we find the triad bon, *sgruñ* and *lde’u* ⁵³⁾. dPa-bo gCug-lag explains that *sgruñ* included tales like that of “Ro-lañs gser-sgrub”, presumably a version of the Indian *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* and was “an omen of the appearance of Sūtras”, while *lde’u*, “riddles”, presumably a system of making predictions ⁵⁴⁾, was “an omen of the appearance of Abhidharma-*mapiṭaka*” ⁵⁵⁾.

To sum up, our čhos-pa sources indicate that while bon-pos were invited to Tibet from neighbouring countries to the west and northwest, i.e. from areas which were tantric and śaivist centres, there already existed an indigenous priesthood in Tibet, a section of which was likewise styled bon-pos, at least by the later tradition ⁵⁶⁾. Čhos-pa authors have not distinguished these two categories; by calling both “bon-pos”, the contemporary lamaist bon-pos who made such arrogant claims for their sTon-pa gŠen-rab were made to appear as exponents of a thoroughly heretical doctrine.

However, the picture will not be complete before a thorough study is made of the bon-pos’ own texts. This has yet to be undertaken, but

50) Stein *Civilisation*, p. 199.

51) See n. 43.

52) For the translation “sacred conventions”, see Snellgrove and Richardson *Cultural History*, p. 59. For the meaning of čhos in this connection, see Haarh, p. 447 n. 6: “Čhos is an integral idea of the Tibetan royalty, being the religious law entrusted to the sacerdotal class... Čhos signifies the Universal Order... both in nature... and in society... guaranteed by the presence of the Tibetan king”.

53) Haarh, p. 88 and 107 (quoting dPa-bo gCug-lag and the Chronicle of the 5th Dalai Lama).

54) Tucci *Die Religionen Tibets*, p. 264.

55) Haarh, p. 103-4.

56) E.g. Čhos-kyi ñi-ma, see Hoffmann *Quellen*, p. 329-330 and p. 416; Haarh p. 102.

at least some progress has been made. First of all, we must realize that bon-po does not, in these texts, normally mean “invoker”, but “follower of bon”, i.e. “a follower of the doctrine of sTon-pa gŠen-rab”, with the undertone of “a follower of the true religion of Tibet, i.e. the religion which was established before the coming of čhos”. sTon-pa gŠen-rab is, of course, not an historical person. He is what Snellgrove calls “a religious hero”⁵⁷⁾ and his biography as found in “gZer-mig” consists of elements copied partly from the “religious epic” of Padmasambhava, partly from convential biographies of Śākyamuni.

However, certain main points in the “epic” of sTon-pa gŠen-rab no doubt correspond to historical realities. In chapter 12 we see sTon-pa gŠen-rab as Buddha and ruler of sTag-gzig. Khyab-pa lag-riñ (“Khyab-pa Long-Hands”), the bon-po version of Māra⁵⁸⁾, sends his followers who steal the seven horses of gŠen-rab. He decides to hide the horses in Tibet. gŠen-rab follows in hot pursuit, “not (as he explains) in order to get the horses only, but because the time has come to spread the doctrine in Žaṅ-žuṅ and Tibet”⁵⁹⁾. In both countries he communicates part of his doctrine to local bon-pos. Note that bon-pos are supposed to exist in Žaṅ-žuṅ and Tibet *before* the coming of gŠen-rab. However, it is only after the death of gŠen-rab that the doctrine is propagated by his disciples in various countries, e.g. China, India, Tibet and Žaṅ-žuṅ. This is described in chapter 17. Bon-po and čhos-pa texts accordingly agree in stating that an organised doctrine bearing the name of “bon” was brought to Tibet from an area situated rather vaguely in the West.

According to chapter 1 of a hitherto unpublished but highly interesting text, the “Great Exposition of the Created World”, of which the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) possesses a copy⁶⁰⁾—a text which was “discovered” as a “treasure” by Khod-spo bLo-gros thog-

57) *Nine Ways*, p. 15 n. 1: “The story of “the religious hero” *gSen-rab* is in effect another great Tibetan epic, comparable in importance with the great epic of Gesar, which thanks to the intensive studies of R. A. Stein, is now far better known. Yet *gSen-rab*’s legend is supported by a whole complex system of religious practices, altogether an extraordinary phenomenon”.

58) The epithet “Long-Hands” suggests some connection with the Iranian demon Būšyānštā who is characterized precisely by his long arms—in Mihr Yašt 97 he is called dar^aγō’. gav.

59) See Snellgrove *Nine Ways*, p. 14-15.

60) Srid-pa rgyud kyi kha-byañ čhen-mo, Bibl. Nat. ms. tib. n. 493. See R. A. Stein “Recherches sur l’Epopée et le Barde au Tibet”, *Bibliothèque de l’Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises*, vol. XIII, Paris 1959 p. 31.

med, in all probability in 1301⁶¹), i.e. at about the same time as the composition of *gZer-mig—bon* declined after the initial propagation while *čhos* prospered. This was due to the curse of a certain demon, *Lha-sbyin nag-po*⁶²). Accordingly, the *gšen gSañ-ba 'dus-pa* (*Guhya-samāja*) transforms himself into “the son of a god” and in the land of humans, in India, he subdues the demon and assumes the name of *Śākyamuni*. As *Śākyamuni* he proclaims The Holy Doctrine (*dam-pa'i čhos*)⁶³). This is a good example of the syncretist approach of many *bon-po* texts: *čhos* is first stated to have spread due to a demonic curse; thereafter a divine being, called a *gšen*, incarnates himself as *Śākyāmuni* and founds the “holy *čhos*”. It is unclear whether we are dealing with two separate forms of “*čhos*” or whether the apparent confusion is due to the juxtaposition of two traditions. Elsewhere⁶⁴) the text states that in order to prevent the doctrine of *gŠen-rab* from declining, *bon*, *čhos* and *sman* (“the art of medicine”) were all propagated.

All this indicates that there is no real opposition between *bon* and *čhos* on the doctrinal plane. An investigation of the various personages who are said to have brought *bon* from *Žaň-žuň* to Tibet confirms this. We find a number of them described in a very important text, the “Oral Tradition of *Žaň-žuň*”⁶⁵). Many of them are well-known from other texts, and a fair number of them, no doubt, correspond to historical figures. In any case, some of them are well known in at least one *čhos-pa* tradition, the *Nyingmapa*⁶⁶).

One episode from the “Oral Tradition of *Žaň-žuň*” must suffice by way of illustration. It is taken from the biography of *Gyer-spun*s *sNan-bžer lod-po* who was a contemporary of *Khri-sroñ lde-bcan*; in other words, he lived in the 8th century A.D. As I cannot hope to improve upon it, I reproduce the translation of Dr. Snellgrove⁶⁷).

“As for the place to which he was attached all his life, it was the region

61) *bsTan-rcis* 117.

62) Cf. *bsTan-rcis* 55, quoted above (see n. 23).

63) *Fol.* 15b et seq.

64) *Fol.* 14a.

65) *Žaň-žuň sñan-rgyud*, published as vol. 73 in the *Śatapiṭaka Series*, New Delhi 1968.

66) See my *Bonpo Studies*.

67) *Cultural History*, p. 103-104. For the date of *sNan-bžer lod-po*, see op cit., p. 101.

an island in the middle of the lake. At the end of every repast *Gyer-spungs* placed a small bowlful of moistened meal aside. Then the ice of the lake was in an unsafe condition, and so with each little bowlful of moistened meal, the master and his disciple made some broth which they drank. The sediment of each lot of broth, he poured on the rock which served as his pillow, but still the ice was unsafe. So they scraped off the sediment of the broth and put it in water and drank it. Thus three years passed. Then the servant thought: "The two of us, master and pupil, will die some time whenever it may be. How if I just fall off a cliff and turn myself into a corpse?" So he said to his master: "Worthy *Gyer-spungs*, there is a fresh human corpse". "Have you come upon one?" his master asked. "Yes", the servant replied. "Well, go round the island, and see what there is". So he went and returned with the news: "There is the corpse of a wild ass". "As we are of undefiled stock, we may not eat it", his master said. A few days later he went round the island again, and reported that there was the corpse of a woman with a bad goitre. "We are not allowed to eat carrion", his master said. "Put our things together". What is *Gyer-spungs* doing now, the servant thought, there will be no way of leaving tomorrow, and he was frightened. *Gyer-spungs* said: "Hold on to me and close your eyes". They travelled a long way, and then he thought "I have left the cooking tripod behind", so he opened his eyes and looked back. A woman wearing jewelry was coming along, winding up a length of white cloth. Then he looked forwards, and there was a woman in front just like the other one, and she was spreading out a length of white cloth, on which the two of them, master and pupil, were advancing. But as soon as he looked, they pulled away the cloth and disappeared, and just as they would have reached the water's edge, they fell into the water. Then a number of laymen from those northern plains gathered around them, and the master said to them: "I am *Gyer-spungs*". But his flesh was withered and his hair had grown long, so they did not recognize him and said: "*Gyer-spungs* died many years ago. You are not he". Then he told them the whole story and they believed in him. First they gave him lye, then the milk of a white goat and of a white 'bri (female of the yak), and after that they gave them all the food they wanted, and so restored them to normal bodily strength".

As Dr. Snellgrove remarks, the willingness of the disciple to sacrifice himself for his guru and the implication of cannibalism belong to the Indian tantric tradition. So do the women dressed in jewelry—they are *ḍākinīs*, attendant goddesses of meditating yogins, who play an important part in the Nyingmapa tradition as well. In other words, we are dealing with tantric adepts of the siddha-type, very similar to figures like Padmasambhava ⁶⁸). The teaching of these bon-po siddhas

68) The "Great Exposition of the Created World" juxtaposes (fol. 27a) "sToñ-rgyuñ mthu-chen of bon" and "Pad-ma 'byuñ-gnas (i.e. Padmasambhava) of chos". A modern painting in my possession of sToñ-rgyuñ mthu-chen shows a naked ascetic of the siddha type.

is called the "Great Perfection" (rjogs-pa čhen-po, rjogs-čhen), and we find a detailed exposition of it in the "Oral Tradition of Žaṅ-žun". We know that the teachings of the "Great Perfection" were transmitted as part of an established tradition in Central Tibet (gCaṅ) around 1000 A.D. ⁶⁹). A fully established tradition requires some time to mature; in other words, we are led back precisely to the bon-po siddhas, some said to be Tibetan, others said to be natives of Žaṅ-žun, who lived in the 8 century A.D., and whose teachings are copiously quoted in the "Great Perfection" text called "The Fifteen Chapters of the Supreme Doctrine" (A-khrid thun-mchams bčo-lña) of which I have translated a number of chapters in *Bonpo Studies*. This text which was written by Bru-čhen rGyal-ba gyuṅ-druṅ (1242-1290) ⁷⁰), is a systematisation of the teachings of siddhas like Dran-pa nam-kha' ⁷¹) and Li-šu stag-rin ⁷²), bon-po siddhas of the 8th century; their teachings, as quoted in this text, are as Buddhist as any contemporary čhos-pa teachings. Further, the texts which "The Fifteen Chapters of the Supreme Doctrine" quotes, are not fictitious texts invented for the occasion, but are on the contrary in several cases texts of which we now actually possess copies.

What, then, is to be made of all this? We do not as yet have the results of a systematic study of the origins of the bon-po siddhas and their relations to the indigenous priests, likewise called bon-pos, at our disposal. However, I believe the following point of view is the one which best seems to fit the facts as we know them at present. Both bon-po and čhos-pa sources suggest that Buddhist siddhas, i.e. tantric adepts, and possibly also Śivaist yogins, established themselves in what is now Western Tibet, but which formerly—up to the 7th-8th centuries—was an independent non-Tibetan kingdom called Žaṅ-žun. This happened prior to—or at least independently of—the official introduction of Buddhism in Tibet in the form of čhos. Siddhas from Žaṅ-žun thereupon established themselves in Tibet where they, as all sources

69) See my *Bonpo Studies*, passim.

70) bsTan-rcis 108, 116.

71) Dran-pa nam-mkha' is mentioned as a disciple of Padmasambhava in rGyal-po'ibka'i thaṅ-yig, chpt. 10, fol. 30a, 5 et seq., translated by Hoffmann in "The Religions of Tibet", p. 61.

72) sŅa-čhen Li-šu stag-rin seems to be an important figure in the history of the bon-pos. According to bsTan-rcis 30 he was born 1691 B.C., i.e. he comes in the same class of siddhas as Dran-pa nam-mkha', Che-bdaṅ rig-'jin, and Padma

agree in stating, became violently opposed to those Buddhist groups who enjoyed the particular favour of the royal house and who designated their doctrine as čhos. For reasons which at present are not quite clear, the tantric siddhas from Žaṅ-žuṅ and their Tibetan followers identified themselves with the indigenous priesthood, a section of which were called bon-pos, “invokers”. What, however, is not always sufficiently realized, is that during the following centuries čhos-pas as well as bon-po siddhas assimilated all they could of indigenous Tibetan religious beliefs, and that the ancient lha-čhos, “sacred conventions”, disappeared altogether as an independent institution. Part of the literature which was created during the 8th and the following centuries by bon-po siddhas may—particularly, perhaps, as regards treatises on logic, vinaya and prajñāpāramitā—be copied from that of the čhos-pas; but “by far the greater part would seem to have been absorbed through learning and then retold, and this is not just plagiarism”⁷³). In any case, bon-po literature—although it does, like that of the čhos-pa, contain much pre-Buddhist material—was developed by siddhas and later by monks who, however much they may have been opposed to čhos, were, in fact Buddhist; by the later tradition, čhos-pa as well as bon-po, they have, however, been identified with those indigenous, non-Buddhist priests who were likewise called bon-po. These non-Buddhist, indigenous bon-pos, may, of course, have participated in the literary output of čhos-pas as well as of bon-po siddhas. On the other hand, the resistance which the indigenous priesthood, supported by powerful aristocratic families, put up against čhos, and the persecution which this priesthood subsequently suffered, has by later lamaist bon-po tradition been taken to refer to the bon-po siddhas from Žaṅ-žuṅ. The picture is, in whichever way one chooses to regard it, extraordinarily complicated. It is, however, obvious that if it can be established that

mthoṅ-grol, for whom similar dates of birth are given, but who all seem to have been active around the 8th century A.D. bs Tan-rcis 48: “In the Earth-Monkey Year Lord sNa-chen Li-šu went to Tibet from rTags-gzigs, i.e. the Inner Žaṅ-žuṅ, by means of his skill in magic, bringing 10 000 Bon texts (552 B.C.)”. bsTan-rcis 54: “In the Earth-ox Year... a demon having entered the heart of the king... the sun of the Doctrine was made to set... having hid the Five Secret Treasures and the 1700 subsidiary Treasures... Li-šu... went to the Heavenly Sphere (749 A.D.)”.

73) Snellgrove *Nine Ways*, p. 12.

there existed a Buddhist siddha tradition in West Tibet independently of the official introduction of Buddhism in Central Tibet under the patronage of the Tibetan kings in the 7th century, it will be necessary to reconsider many aspects of the early religious and cultural history of Tibet, and a new chapter can perhaps be written in the history of religious contacts between India and its neighbouring countries.

THE PROBLEM OF „DIE SOZIOLOGISCHE VERORTUNG DES ANTIKEN GNOSTIZISMUS“

BY

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Hans G. Kippenberg's *Versuch einer soziologischen Verortung des antiken Gnostizismus* (Numen, XVII, Fasc. 3, December 1970) is one of the most interesting recent contributions to our understanding of Gnosticism and could inaugurate a new chapter in the study of the subject. His argument, however, is open to a number of grave objections which ought to be discussed and cleared up before we can proceed further. I will try to explain the reasons for my doubts one by one.

Like almost all sociologies of knowledge, Kippenberg's attempt suffers from a confusion between two entirely different questions. The first is why did certain people at a certain time in a certain place find such and such a doctrine plausible? The second question is why was such and such a doctrine conceived and elaborated? The two questions are distinct and the only factor they have in common is the insight that people conceive certain doctrines and consider them true for reasons other than purely empirical and/or rational ones. Obviously, it is always much easier to answer the first question than to answer the second one; but this is no justification for confusing the two. Kippenberg attempts an explanation why certain people in the eastern margins of the Roman Empire adhered to Gnosticism and considered its teachings plausible. The attempt is based on the assumption that these beliefs were not sincerely held but were an ideology, that is, on the assumption that they were held for reasons other than they were purported to be held. This assumption is not unjustifiable but needs careful examination. But in so far as he seeks to explain why Gnostic teachings were conceived and advocated, even the attempt is open to doubts. His article glosses over the distinction between these two questions. He starts off by invoking Topitsch's theories about the origins of metaphysical thoughts, i.e. he starts by examining the genesis of Gnostic teachings.

But before long he slides into an explanation of why people found them plausible.

Topitsch's theories are themselves, to say the least, questionable. Topitsch has observed quite correctly that there are structural or morphological similarities between metaphysical teachings and ordinary experiences. He has therefore jumped to the conclusion that metaphysical doctrines are constructed as analogies of ordinary experiences, be they biological, political or technical. His conclusion from this observation is that metaphysical doctrines are redundant. They merely duplicate, for no good reason, certain crucial and significant human experiences.

There is no denying the initial observation that there is a structural or morphological similarity between ordinary experiences and metaphysical doctrines. But it seems to me that Topitsch has drawn the wrong conclusions from this correct observation. If one scrutinises the matter more carefully, one should reach an entirely different conclusion. There is a factor which usually intervenes between the ordinary experience and the metaphysical doctrine. This factor is mythology. Every myth known to us consists of a story or tale which is either a slight distortion of an ordinary experience or an assembly of elements taken from ordinary experience in an order different from the one in which they hang together in ordinary experience. As time goes by, the myth is elaborated and the distortion becomes greater. Nevertheless, even the most elaborate myth on record is not an arbitrary invention but exhibits structural similarities with an ordinary event. For this reason it is acceptable to consider the original, ordinary event its model. There is an isomorphic relationship between the story of the natural event and every subsequent distortion or embroidery or exaggeration. If one were to employ the language of traditional theology, one could say that the tale of the original and ordinary event is the *typos* and the myths, the anti-types. The ordinary event pre-figured the myth and the myths are figures of the ordinary, natural event. There exists, therefore, a typological relationship between the natural event (the model) and the events described in the myths. Eventually, and one could document a great many instances, the myth is expressed conceptually rather than figuratively and thus we obtain a metaphysical doctrine ¹). This doctrine

1) See P. Munz, *Relationship and Solitude, A Study of the Relationship between Ethics, Metaphysics and Mythology*, London, 1964, p. 79 and Ch. VI.

is the last anti-type of the original event; and the original, ordinary event can be said to pre-figure it. As in all cases of pre-figuration, it is however, never possible to describe the relationship between *typos* and anti-type as an instance of implication. No amount of logical deduction would ever yield knowledge of the metaphysical doctrine. Pre-figuration is not a sort of implication.

If this is so, Topitsch's insight remains valid. The ordinary experience is indeed the 'model' for the metaphysical doctrine. But his conclusion which makes the resulting metaphysical doctrine a redundant duplicate of the original model is rendered invalid. For if the intervention of myths is recognised, it becomes clear that the metaphysical doctrine which eventually results from the conceptualisation of a highly elaborate myth, is far from redundant. It is no more redundant than, in theological language, the type. If Isaac's sacrifice was a figure of Jesus' sacrifice (or its model) this does not mean that the anti-type is redundant. The gradual mythologisation of the ordinary event, on the contrary, far from being a redundant exercise, is a highly satisfying intellectual refinement of the emotional significance of the ordinary event. Nobody can be moved much by the story that a carpenter made a table from pieces of timber. But if the carpenter becomes a celestial being and the table, the world, then the story highlights the emotional significance of creativity in a way in which the original story could not. For this reason Topitsch's original observation that the ordinary event is used as a model for the metaphysical doctrine, without being false, leads to a conclusion which is diametrically opposed to the conclusion which Topitsch derives from it. The intervention of mythology between the model and the metaphysical doctrine demonstrates that the metaphysical doctrine is an important summary of the typological elaboration of the mythological distortions and elaborations of the ordinary event.

Bearing this rejection of Topitsch's conclusions, albeit not of his initial observation, in mind, we can now return to Kippenberg's application of Topitsch to Gnosticism. Using Topitsch's explanation of the genesis of metaphysical doctrines and referring to the social model, Kippenberg explains Gnosticism as a doctrine which taught that the Demiurge, the Lord and Creator of the world, is an evil tyrant. Convincedly he concludes that such a doctrine is likely to appear plausible to people who are oppressed by a political tyrant and whose political experience is similar to that of the people in the margins of the eastern

mediterranean who suffered Roman imperial tyranny. But what he does not explain is the actual genesis of the doctrine.

Leaving aside the question of the actual genesis of the doctrine, it appears that Kippenberg is arguing in a circle. He seeks to work out the common denominator of all or most Gnostic teachings and finds it in the doctrine that the world owes its existence to a malevolent Demiurge. Nobody would wish to doubt that this doctrine is an important ingredient in almost all Gnostic doctrines. Admittedly given the vast *corpus* of Gnostic writings, it is difficult to find a common denominator or to know what precisely "Gnosticism" is or whether there is indeed anything that could be referred to as Gnosticism. Who indeed was a 'Gnostic'? One must therefore sympathise with Kippenberg's attempt to define Gnosticism. But one must question his definition, especially as his definition takes its cue from Topitsch's model. The question is whether the doctrine of the evil Demiurge is the crucial essence of Gnosticism. Closer and independent examination will reveal that it is not. One would have little difficulty in showing that most Gnostic doctrines could be equally well if not better, described as doctrines of exile, of alienation, of estrangement, of imprisonment, of entombment of the soul or the spirit. The Demiurge, of course played his part in causing the exile or entombment and in prolonging it. But the emphasis is shifted. The work of the Demiurge is a secondary aspect; whereas the exile or entombment of the soul becomes the common denominator of all Gnostic doctrines. One has to admit that there may be some argument as to which of these aspects of Gnosticism is crucial and which, accidental. But the point is that Kippenberg is driven to choosing the doctrine of the evil Demiurge as central because he believes that metaphysical doctrines are built on a model of ordinary, in this case political, experiences. And here the *petitio principii* is manifest. First he argues that metaphysical doctrines are modelled on political experiences; and then he defines the essence of Gnosticism as the doctrine of the evil Demiurge — a doctrine which does indeed look as if it had been modelled on a certain political experience. But unless he provides independent proof that the doctrine of the evil Demiurge is in fact the central element in Gnosticism, he has argued in a vicious circle. First he uses Topitsch's model of a certain political situation as a definition of Gnosticism; and then he turns round and claims that Gnostics were people who had experienced this particular political

situation. Even if one could be more confident about Topitsch's critique of metaphysics, Kippenberg's circular application of the argument is not very enlightening²⁾. Kippenberg admits in his second foot-note that the problem of demarcation and definition is difficult and that if one takes Gnosticism in its widest sense the central Theologoumenon is indeed what I say it is — the identity of the soul, entombed in the world, with the transcendental spirit. But he declares his intention to limit the meaning of Gnosticism and to exclude both Manicheism and Mandaeism. One must grant him that if a sociological analysis is to be attempted, there must be a demarcation of the field both in time and space. One's doubts begin when one discovers the circularity of the argument by which such a demarcation is achieved.

If one looks at Gnosticism through spectacles other than those provided by Topitsch, one will be likely to detect a rather different common denominator of Gnostic doctrines. Looked at in cold blood, one will find that the common denominator is the doctrine that the original Spirit or parts or splinters of it, have become entombed in or surrounded by matter and that they are struggling to return to their source. Furthermore, as the very word "Gnosis" indicates, it is believed that one of the most important agents of liberation is the *knowledge* of the true state of affairs. That is, if at all possible, liberation is not due to grace, but to knowledge. If this is the essence of Gnosticism³⁾, Kippenberg's sociology of Gnosticism does no longer appear very pertinent. The relevance of his explanation depends, in fact, on the assumption that the doctrine of the evil Demiurge is of the essence of Gnosticism and that everything else in Gnosticism is accidental or

2) It is interesting and perhaps symptomatic that recently an American scholar has presented a similarly circular theory about the connection between the 16th century Reformation and political régimes. G. E. Swanson, *Religion and Regime*, Ann Arbor, 1967, tries to show that Catholicism survived in countries which had commensal or centralised régimes and that Lutheranism or Anglicanism became the dominant faith in limited centralist states. Apart from his complete disregard of social factors and his neglect of the vital differences between Anglicanism and Lutheranism, his argument, like Kippenberg's, is circular. Swanson gives a classification of political régimes in terms modelled on religious ideas (Ch. II) and then comes up with the 'discovery' that each régime countenances the religious ideas it is modelled on. If Kippenberg moves clock-wise by starting with political models, Swanson moves anti-clock-wise by starting with religious models.

3) P. Munz, op. cit., p. 191.

peripheral. But we have seen that this assumption is based upon a *petitio principii*.

A closer inspection — which must remain, of necessity, cursory — will also bear out the contention that Kippenberg's characterisation of Gnosticism is indeed arbitrary. He suggests that Gnosticism was most at home among the Hellenised intellectuals of the eastern margins of the Roman Empire which had come during the 2nd and 1st century B.C. under the heel of the Roman legions. But it is very questionable whether this is really true. To begin with, if one sees the doctrine of entombment or estrangement from the One Spirit as the centre of Gnosticism, one will easily recognise the extent to which Gnosticism was indebted to Orphic traditions and to Platonism ⁴). Next, one must grant that in so far as the concepts of entombment and estrangement are built around a dualism between Spirit and Matter, they have close connections with a radical dualism and owed much of their propagation and popularity to the later influences of Mani which came from much further east ⁵). And last not least, it is apparent that the more sophisticated Christian theologies of both Clement of Alexandria and Origen, not to speak of the ascetic theology of Evagrius Ponticus and of Cassian, were thoroughly suffused with Gnosticism ⁶). This latter observation by itself would, of course, not necessarily invalidate Kippenberg's localisation of Gnosticism. But, at the same time, it would widen the meaning of the term 'Gnosticism' so much as to include the whole of educated Christianity before the advent of St. Augustine and the development of a properly western or Latin theology of Christianity in terms of grace rather than of Gnosis. Western theology, in contrast to eastern theology, developed the idea that the soul, far from being a splinter of the One Spirit seeking reabsorption and even-

4) S. Pétrement, *Le Dualisme chez Platon, les Gnostiques et les Manichéens*, Paris, 1947. It has always seemed to me that it was a serious deficiency of the otherwise splendid book of H. Jonas, *Gnosis und Spätantiker Geist*, Göttingen, 1954, that it considered Gnosticism too much as something unique and failed to relate it to older traditions of metaphysics.

5) See e.g., A. D. Nock, *Early Gentile Christianity and its Hellenic Background*, Harper Torchbook, 1964, p. 48, and the literature cited.

6) P. Munz, "John Cassian", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, XI, 1960, pp. 2-5. There is much to be said for the view that before St. Augustine the only Christians who were definitely not Gnostics or Gnosticising were the Judeo-Christians as described by J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums*, Tübingen, 1949.

tual annihilation in the One Spirit, was an individual creation of the benevolent God whose salvation consisted not in re-absorption but in a beatific vision in which the individual soul remained distinct *vis à vis* its Creator. However this may be, this was a much later development which notoriously owed much to St. Augustine's reaction against his own early Manicheism. But it does show that Gnosticism and early Christian theology had much in common. And if they had much in common, Kippenberg's contention that Gnosticism was the metaphysics or Ideology of a special group of politically impotent intellectuals in the eastern margins of the Roman Empire, loses its point. Finally, and this may be a more direct argument against Kippenberg, the teaching of Marcion, which very narrowly missed making a profound impact on the early Roman Church, was thoroughly Gnostic even in Kippenberg's sense. Kippenberg might argue that the rejection of Marcion by the Roman church proves his point, for the people who rejected him were not politically impotent intellectuals who had come under the heel of the Roman legions and had, therefore, no reason for thinking Marcion's teaching plausible. But little reflection is needed to see that the people who rejected Marcion were not exactly members of the leading Roman intellectual élite either. Whatever their reasons for the rejection, it could not have been that they felt at home in the Roman Empire and identified with the existing power structure.

There remains Kippenberg's concluding appeal to E. Fromm. Nobody can fail to appreciate the value of Fromm's positive contribution to psychology and of his neo-Freudianism. But his opinions on Christology always raise the gravest of doubts. To begin with, like Freud, he takes it for granted, that every image of God must be modelled on, or a projection of, an experience either of one's father or of political authority and therefore, to all thoughtful and intelligent people, redundant. We are right back with Topitsch. But this is not the least of it. Even on Fromm's own ground it is doubtful whether Kippenberg is entitled to invoke Fromm. Fromm argues that the uneducated masses in their revolutionary hatred of social authority, made a God out of the suffering man Jesus. But even if they did, such a Christology is a sublimation — that is, a withdrawal from revolutionary activity. And the early Christians, whatever their dislike or hatred of the existing order, were indeed hardly revolutionaries. It is true that the Gnostics denied that Jesus was a man. But since the Christians who maintained

that he was a man, were not revolutionaries one can hardly argue that the Gnostic denial of Jesus' manhood was an indication of the fact that the Gnostics were the intellectual representatives of the well-to-do bourgeoisie, i.e. at the opposite end of the social pole.

If one throws doubt on Topitsch and Fromm and on all methods of the sociology of religion that are based on similar arguments, this does not necessarily mean that one rejects the sociology of religion. Admittedly the sociology of religion cannot be pursued without a theory as to the connections between social structures and religious (or metaphysical) beliefs. The necessity for such a theory is implied in the very idea of a sociology of knowledge, be it religious or metaphysical or any other knowledge. For this idea is based on the reflection that religious or metaphysical ideas are not "free floating in an autonomous vacuum developing according to their own internal logic, bumping into other ideas by the chance of historical contact"⁷⁾ or developed, one might add, from compelling empirical observation. If one believes that knowledge is developed according to criteria other than inherent ones and that it is, therefore, not autonomous, one has to have a theory about the criteria according to which it is developed. The only way in which one can avoid a special theory is to accept every system of knowledge at its face value. But this is precisely what the sociology of knowledge refuses to do. On the face of it every piece of knowledge or act of belief or dogma claims that it has either rational or empirical validation. The sociology of knowledge is sceptical of this claim and rejects it. Hence it is obliged to advance a theory about the criteria it is prepared to accept. By thus calling knowledge's bluff, it must always end up by characterising every piece of knowledge, as an ideology — that is, as knowledge which is advanced for reasons other than the ones it purports to be advanced for. The sociology of knowledge, therefore, whatever its variety, comes up with the finding that religious or metaphysical knowledge is not what it purports to be, but is an ideology advanced for extraneous and heteronomous reasons. The discovery that knowledge is ideological rather than autonomous and free floating is not an empirical discovery of an actual state of affairs, but is implicit in the very idea of a sociology of knowledge and is dictated by the method the sociology of knowledge employs. For this reason, while

7) Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, London, 1970, p. 140.

there is no escaping the fact that one has to employ a theory in order to discover the rationale of religious or metaphysical knowledge, one has to be doubly careful as to the particular theory one employs. To-pitsch's theory is very simple, perhaps too simple in that it points to no more than a straight connection between political experience and metaphysical ideas. It might be necessary to think of this connection in a more indirect way and to look for a missing link between politico-social experience and metaphysico-religious belief. Quite recently it has been suggested that the human body might be that missing link. In her *Natural Symbols*, Mary Douglas observes that "the social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived" ⁸⁾ and suggests that one could view metaphysical and religious beliefs as dependent on the way in which people experience their bodies, its skin and its orifices, i.e. those parts through which a connection with the outside world is established ⁹⁾. In turn, since the physical body is experienced in terms of one's experience of the society one lives in, it follows that there is a relationship between the social order and religious or metaphysical beliefs. If one were to apply her theory to Gnosticism, one could say that, since Gnostics were predominantly intellectuals, they would form a society in which personal relations are strong and lively and formal group organisation weak. In such a society, she says, the principles which are believed to govern the universe, act as multipliers of human success or failure. There is total escalation (reabsorption into the One Spirit) for those who play according to the rules (i.e. who have 'knowledge') and total degradation to those who fail. The argument states that when people have close personal relationships ("strong grid") but a very loose formal social structure ("weak group") they will experience their bodies as being something very individual whose success depends on enterprise and calculation. With such a conception of the body, it is likely that people will see the principles which govern the Universe as multipliers of human success or failure. By contrast, where group is strong, people will experience their bodies as subject to external forces and believe that the cosmic order is fully controlled by prickly prohibitions which have to be observed punctiliously ¹⁰⁾. This identification of Gnostics with social orders in which "grid is

8) Op. cit., p. 65.

9) Cp. her *Purity and Danger*, London, 1966.

10) *Natural Symbols*, London, 1970, p. 142.

strong and group is weak", is, of course, purely tentative. Mary Douglas herself says nothing about Gnosticism but she does quote an interesting description of Augustine's conversion to Manicheism (which is to all intents and purposes a form of Gnosticism in my sense of the term) by Peter Brown ¹¹). According to Peter Brown, Augustine, at this time in his life, did indeed exhibit the traits which one would expect him to exhibit if my interpretation of Gnosticism in terms of Mary Douglas' theory is correct. And what is more, there is no circularity here. Brown's book appeared four years before Mary Douglas' book and his findings are therefore quite independent. It is particularly interesting to see that if one employs Mary Douglas' theory about the connection between forms of society and forms of metaphysico-religious knowledge, Augustine's Manicheism appears as part of Gnosticism; but if one employs Topitsch's theory, as Kippenberg does, Manicheism is explicitly ruled out. I wish to add this reference to Mary Douglas in order to point out that the sociology of religion should perhaps concern itself more with the search for the missing link and be less content with seeking a simple and straight connection between social forms and thought forms. And if one were to follow Mary Douglas' suggestion, it would turn out that Gnostics have much in common with many other people who are not Gnostics but who also have strong gridding and weak grouping and who therefore believe that "magic" is at hand to help the individual in a competitive society ¹²). However this may be, Mary Douglas' theory has an enormous advantage over all theories employed by the sociology of religion known to me, in that it enables us to account not only for the fact that in certain societies certain religious beliefs are found plausible; but also for the actual intellectual genesis of these beliefs. For by channelling the connection between social forms and religious beliefs *via* the human body, Mary Douglas' theory can explain genesis as well as plausibility. The only serious objection to her method is that there is no law in heaven to the effect that the experience of society is prior to one's experience of one's body; and that one could argue with equal force that people experience their social order in terms of their own physical bodies. In this case, her theory would cease to be a serious help, for it would cease to be able

11) *Augustine of Hippo*, London, 1966, p. 49.

12) *Natural Symbols*, London, 1970, p. 144.

to use the physical human body as the missing link between religious beliefs and social forms and would be thrown back, as all earlier theories are, on seeking a direct relationship between social order and religious belief ¹³).

To sum up. Topitsch's theory about the origin of metaphysics, though based on a correct observation of a relationship between ordinary experience and metaphysical ideas, is meant to show that metaphysics is redundant and does so by drawing a false conclusion from the initial observation. However this may be, Kippenberg's sociological explanation of Gnosticism, completely dependent as it is on Topitsch, consists of a *petitio principii* which would invalidate his explanation even if one accepted Topitsch's inferences about the status of metaphysics; for Kippenberg defines the core of Gnosticism in terms of Topitsch's model and then argues that Gnosticism so defined was espoused by people of whom one can say that the model was indeed their daily political experience. By contrast, an independent examination of Gnosticism shows that its core was rather different and precisely a form of metaphysico-religious thought which was common to a great many people other than those indicated by Kippenberg.

13) Mary Douglas, op. cit., p. 65 is a little ambiguous on this point. It is only if one reads her *Natural Symbols* with her earlier *Purity and Danger* fresh in mind, that the idea of the human body as the missing link comes out clearly.

A LOGICAL TREATMENT OF SOME UPANISADIC PUZZLES AND CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF SACRIFICE

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Abbreviations

AB	Aitareya brahmana	ManS	Manava srautasutra
Ait	Aitareya Upaniṣhad	Mun	Mundaka Upanishad
ApS	Apastamba srautasutra	PB	Pancavimsa brahmana
AV	Atharvaveda samhita	R	Radhakrishnan's translation of the Upanishads
BU	Brihad-arāṇyaka Upaniṣhad	RV	Rigveda
BYV	Black Yajur Veda see TS	Sank	Sankhayana srautasutra
CU	Chandogya Upanishad	SB	Svetāśvatara Upaniṣhad
H	Heestermann, <i>Ancient Indian</i> ...	TS	Taittiriya samhita
Hume	Hume's translation of the Upaniṣhads	TU	Taittiriya Upanishad
Kaus	Kaushitaki Upanishad	WYV	White Yajur Veda see SB
M	Müller's translation of the Upanishads		

Notes which include three pages for a Upanishad passage are in the order Hume's translation, Radhakrishnan's translation, Müller's translation, volume and page.

Expostulatory queries concerning the development of sacrifice in the Upaniṣads have given birth to multifarious explicatory models of conceptualization. Indeed, the endeavors of many scholars have been directed toward the construction of a model comprehensive enough to accommodate the wide variety of sacrificial instances in the Upaniṣads by affirming a singular and distinctive economy presumed to undergird all such usages. The burden of this paper is not to deny the efficacy such models lack despite their continued and often misconceived applications. Rather, it is the task of what follows to display clearly the enormous complexity which pervades a logical analysis of sacrifice independently

* The authors would like to thank Dr. Raymond Panikkar for his many insightful comments which helped engender this essay.

of the models which have been used to simplify it. In fact, an examination of the logical function of sacrifice in the Upaniṣads seems to engender more problems than perhaps it solves. The ties between the Upaniṣads, the Vedas, Brahmanas, Arāṇyakas, Sūtras, and other supporting documents to which they are attached, and the Mahābhārata are so inextricably knit that one cannot legitimately discuss any one separately. Yet, strangely enough, these works by no means present a unified view-point, and the flux of meaning is indeed so great that only the most general historical pattern can be developed with any assurance. For that reason this paper will be divided into two parts, each of which overlaps the other somewhat. The first short section will give an account of the general development of the conception of sacrifice up to the beginning of the Upaniṣadic period. The second part will classify and attempt to interpret all the major instances of sacrifice in the thirteen principal Upaniṣads.

I

Most likely the Aryans entered India from the northwest, probably about the middle of the second millennium B.C. with at least some of the religious hymns of the Ṛgveda already formed. Occasional references to geographic locations in what is now Afghanistan occur, and by considering the most probable lines of travel the Aryans can be traced back to Iran. It is not easy to distinguish which sacrificial traditions they brought and which were adapted from the indigenous Dravidian cults unless a pure Aryan tradition could be unearthed. Although strictly this is impossible, a certain amount of useful data can be gained from a comparison with the Iranian religious traditions. Considerable linguistic data support the connection between these two groups,¹⁾ but we will develop only those connections directly involving sacrifice.

The creation myth provides the first instance of such a connection. The Zurvanists maintained that Zurvan sacrificed for a thousand years, producing Ohrmazd as its result, and Ahriman as the result of a doubt about its effectiveness.²⁾ According to TB,³⁾ Prajāpati also doubted:

1) Particularly important are the names of gods, especially Varuna, Mitra, and Rta. cf. RV 1.75.5 and Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 15-40.

2) Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 44. Ormazd, like Prajapati, creates the world: "Ormazd said, 'I have created the world of myself . . .'" p. 133.

3) TB 2.1.2.1-3, trans. of Levi, *La Doctrine du Sacrifice dans les Brahmanas*, p. 28.

“(Prajāpati . . . practiced burning austerities; . . . he wiped his forehead and it was ghee. He held it forth to the fire and was seized by a scruple: Should I offer it? Should I not?” This connection is further substantiated in Maitri U: 4) “one wins . . . the kingdom of Prajāpati (the universe) by the sacrifice which continues to the end of a thousand years.”

A significant form of sacrifice which can be shown to be common to both was the soma sacrifice (Iran: Haoma). A developed Haoma sacrifice is known which incorporated both the liquor and the God,⁵⁾ in which his death by ‘pounding’ (in a mortar) occur. The SB⁶⁾ says “for Soma is a god and they kill him in that they press him.” Thus the sacrifice is interestingly of a god to himself, with life as the result.⁷⁾

The beginnings of the Haoma ritual seem to have included an important blood sacrifice.⁸⁾ The victim’s jawbone and left eye were Haoma’s portion; the left eye symbolized the moon, and in India, soma is identified with the moon.⁹⁾ Blood sacrifice seems to have been rather unimportant in Aryan tradition by the time of its conjunction with Dravidian cults; certainly it was never as important as in the Central American propitiation rites¹⁰⁾ and perhaps was even less evident than in early Jewish ritual.¹¹⁾ An influx of blood rites may

4) Maitri U. 6.36 Hume 451; R 849. trans. is Radhakrishnan.

5) Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 82ff.

6) SB 3.9.4.17.

7) Several semi-parallels with other religious traditions exist, notably the sacrifice of Christ to God for man. The only instance of sacrifice in the Eddas is in this tradition, with Odin gaining the knowledge of the runes. Hovamol 139: “I ween that I hung on that windy tree, / hung there for nights full nine; / with the spear I was wounded, and offered I was / to Othin, Myself to Myself, / on that tree that none may ever know . . .” H. A. Bellows (trans). *The Poetic Edda*, p. 60. Note also the commentary on stanzas 139 and 141, p. 60-61. Somewhat similar myths surrounded the Aztec gods Xipe Totec and Cinteotl, the gods of maize. See C. A. Burland, *The Gods of Mexico*, p. 74.

8) Loisey, *Le Sacrifice*, p. 54: “La religion de l’Avesta met au premier plan le sacrifice sacerdotal du haoma, mais elle n’ignore pas, elle ne supprime pas en principe les sacrifices animaux.”

9) Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 76.

10) Burland is continuously citing instances of human sacrifice to pacify one god or another who would otherwise cause immense trouble.

11) Before the fall of the temple, of course. See, e.g. Numbers 28-29. In conjunction with this theme, however, see Keith, *Philosophy and Religion of the Vedas*, p. 263, who deduces from part of the asvamedha the remains of a human sacrifice.

have come from the indigent culture, however, because as late as the Shalya Parva ¹²⁾ we have mention of sacrifices involving both human flesh and the flesh of all living animals.

The general understanding at this time was still one of subjection to, and worship of, the gods. To abandon the world and oneself to a fate which is beyond human influence is too negative a belief to have lasted for long. It must be possible somehow to sway the gods, if one approaches them in an appropriate manner. ¹³⁾ Loisey ¹⁴⁾ summarizes this view: "Le sacrifice, en un mot, est devenu le sacrifice divin. Tous les sacrifices . . . ont été plus ou moins réinterprétés conformément à cette idée générale du service . . ." This theory was perhaps the primary one of the Vedas, ¹⁵⁾ to which we shall now attend.

As has been said in the foregoing exposition, the R̥gveda represents a compromise between the religions of the invading Aryans and that of the indigenous Indian cultures. ¹⁶⁾ The R̥gveda itself is a religious document rather than a ritual text, and this makes it more difficult to derive an idea of its sacrificial view than it is in the later works which exegete it. ¹⁷⁾ During the upheaval caused by the confluence of the two cultures the ritual patterns which surrounded a particular ceremony became interwoven with other rituals in a third system which textual criticism has only partially resolved. ¹⁸⁾

Of the sets of Vedic ritual literature available, the elder is that of the Black Yajus school, which developed about 1000 B.C. Disparate

¹²⁾ Shalya Parva 50.28-37 p. 93.

¹³⁾ Zaehner, *Zurvan*, p. 254 ff.

¹⁴⁾ Loisey, p. 420.

¹⁵⁾ Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas*, p. 257ff. "As we have seen, the Vedic pantheon is essentially a body of great and powerful gods before whom the worshipper realize to the full his comparative weakness and inability to exist satisfactorily without their constant aid. By the most simple logic he applies to the powers divine the same principle which he applies to other more powerful men, or which are applied to him by his inferiors. He seeks to propitiate them by the process of giving gifts." This gift theory also occurs throughout the Mahabharata, where hardly a sacrifice takes place without munificent gifts being distributed.

¹⁶⁾ For further discussion of this point, see Gonda, *Change and Continuity*, p. 37.

¹⁷⁾ One might say that the process of distilling a world-view from the RV would be similar to distilling one from a Christian hymnal, although the parallel is certainly not exact.

¹⁸⁾ Heestermann, *Ancient Indian Royal Consecration*, p. 4ff.

readings and genealogies in the texts show that at least two recensions existed prior to our oldest text, the Taittiriya Saṃhita, and probably more.¹⁹⁾ The White Yajus school arose slightly later, and it appears to be based on a different recension of the earlier texts. The Yajur and Sama Vedas express the development of ritual concerns, and adapt the Ṛgvedic hymns to the complex performance of sacrifice. The Atharva Veda has developed considerable numbers of magical spells and incantations for various purposes, and is probably more representative of the coupling of Aryan gods with Dravidian animism.²⁰⁾ The Brahmanas bring the ceremonial ritual to its highest peak, and initiate a shift in emphasis to the importance of the understanding, as opposed to the mechanics, of the sacrifice. The Arāṇyakas and the Upaniṣads continue this development, interpreting the sacrifice mystically and clarifying the place of its performance in the total religious context.

Even as early as the Yajur Vedas the accurate performance of the sacrifice has superceded the importance of gifts to the gods for controlling the cosmos. The conception of ceremonial control seems to be one of the fundamental concepts of sacrifice apparent in much of Indian literature. In fact, it exists in all of the textual types down to the Upaniṣads and the Mahābhārata.²¹⁾ Under this conception, the high gods were no longer feared or worshipped with humble devotion, but through the performance of the elaborate and fixed sacrificial rituals brought under compulsion and forced to grant one's every wish.²²⁾ The absurd degrees to which this idea was extrapolated is lucidly expressed by Belvalkar:²³⁾ "Every single detail of the sacrifice was believed to be full of untold potentials for good or for evil according as it was well or ill performed. In fact, all the happenings of the universe—the sun, rain, and harvest, births, deaths, and pestilences,

19) Dutt, *Early Hindu Civilization*, p. 102.

20) R. 45.

21) e.g. BU 6.3.1-13; 6.4.1-28 p. 163-174, 315-331, ii209-224. (The references to the Upaniṣads will always be in the order Hume, Radhakrishnan, Müller. The Müller i or ii refers to the volume. An R. refers to Radhakrishnan alone; M to Müller.)

CU 4.16.1-5; 4.17.1-9 p. 223-225, 417-420, i68-72.

Kaushitaki U 2.4 p. 310, 763, i282.

Shalya Parva 41.1-37 p. 79-80 etc.

22) W. M. Teape, *The Secret Lore of India*, p. 16ff.

23) S. K. Belvalkar, *Lectures on Vedānta Philosophy*, i, 33-34.

the course of the planets in their orbits, the success and stability of kingdoms, the peace and prosperity of the people—were believed to be the direct result of this or that feature of the sacrifice . . . it was the continuance of that (world-creating) process of sacrifice which sustained the world—provided indeed that the sacrifice was performed correctly to the smallest detail of the ritual prescribed.”

At least two important corollaries to this state of control exist. The first is that the power of the priesthood became exceedingly great. The responsibility for maintaining everything in heaven and on earth devolved on the priests through their sacerdotal function, permitting them to usurp the place in society which previously had belonged to the sacral kingship. This process was justified through the concept of *Rta*, which had existed since Indo-Iranian times, and which was originally understood as an impersonal cosmic order or law governing both the movements of the universe and human behavior.²⁴⁾ As E. O. James²⁵⁾ concludes, “It only required the Brahmanic ritual technology to be identified with *Rta*, and the altar to be regarded as the ‘womb of *Rta*’, to establish the supremacy of the priestly offering and to render the position of the Brahmins absolute.” Thus the priests became the true gods, using the sacrificial rites as operators and elements in the producing of any desired result.

As this development continued, it became unimportant to have the gods at all—the sacrificial ritual itself became the religion. Swami Prabhavananda²⁶⁾ comments about this period that “. . . at times undue importance was laid on these things (i.e. the performance of sacrifices and the other religious rituals) . . . so much so that the sacrifices themselves often took the place of a living religion.” The final point of development in this direction is reached when the sacrifices become ends in themselves. It is difficult to point to specific instances when this occurs, because ritualistic lip-service was not infrequently still paid to the gods. However, it is equally as perplexing to see how the mystical objectification of sacrifice which occurs in the Upaniṣads and which we shall discuss in Section II could have evolved unless the gods were first made superfluous. One amusing example of this is given

24) Duchesne-Guillemin, p. 25-29.

25) E. O. James, *Sacrifice and Sacrament*, p. 43.

26) Swami Prabhavananda, *The Spiritual Heritage of India*, p. 36.

in Shalya Parva.²⁷⁾ Kuru is plowing a field, and Shakra (Indra) comes down from heaven to view what is happening. Kuru informs him that whoever dies on the plowed land will go directly to heaven. Indra reports back to the gods, who becomes quite frightened at the prospect: "stop the royal sage, O Shakra, by granting him a boon, if you can. If only by dying there men were to come to heaven, without having performed sacrifices to us, our very existence would be imperiled." This outlook is perhaps reflected in the western world, where the existence of God would for many people disappear were it not for their 'sacrifices' of going to church and performing the related duties.

The second corollary to the concept of priestly control derives from the knowledge of danger. The ritual subjugation of a mighty power to a priest or magician almost always implies a finely balanced state in which the smallest slip will send the magician crashing to his ruin. Examples of this abound in western as well as eastern culture,²⁸⁾ with great danger being necessary for great success. This tension between sacrificer and god is quite unpleasant and the Brahmins at least partially overcome it by substituting the concept of 'becoming' for that of 'control'. Thus, the priest actually becomes, in a mystic sense, the god who symbolizes the power he desires. This is a very subtle, but quite important, shift of emphasis which is essential to elucidating fully the sundry expressions of sacrifice found in the Upaniṣads.

II

As previously indicated, the ritualized sacrifice had developed to its zenith while simultaneously elements were at work to overcome it. Within the Upaniṣads in particular, the sacrificial tradition is superseded by that of sacrificial understanding. It is important to note however, that the relation between the performance and the understanding of the ritual has been overstated by many commentators. Hume,²⁹⁾ for example held, "No longer is worship or sacrifice or good conduct the requisite of religion in this life, or of salvation in the next. Knowledge secures the latter and disapproves of the former. The whole religious

27) Shalya Parva 53.4-12 p. 102.

28) Examples in western literature range from such literary masterpieces as *Faust* to fairy stories like E. R. Eddison's *The Worm Ouroboros* to the magic texts of the Middle Ages. From the East, one need only cite Burton's translation of *The Thousand Nights and One Night*.

29) Hume, p. 54.

doctrine of different gods and of the necessity of sacrificing to the gods is seen to be a stupendous fraud by the man who has acquired meta-physical knowledge . . ." Instead of developing cosmic powers through the medium of the rite, one rather seeks to know, and thereby to control. This theme is still prevalent today, in the aphorism: "Knowledge is power." ³⁰⁾

It is undeniable that such a transition took place, beginning in the Brahmanas and reaching its culmination in the Upaniṣads, but it is rather difficult to understand how it could have done so. We must remember that the sacrifice provided the Brahmins with both their position of power and their livelihood. Thus, the sacrifices were devoted to the welfare of the patrons who paid for them, and there is every indication that they paid liberally. If the very people who were reaping the material benefits of the system were to suddenly expose it as false and ineffective, it would be a bizarre case of extended suicide. And the Upaniṣads certainly do not show us a Brahmanical caste which was unaware of its own position and dignity. In spite of Rabindranath Tagore's ³¹⁾ view of the times in one of his plays—"Oh, shame! Oh, the evil age, when the Brahmin's futile curse recoils upon himself, to sting him into madness."—the Brahmins were neither mad nor futile. Indeed, they seem to have been a very politically astute group.

Meditation of the significance of the Self was a philosophical pursuit that was much more satisfying than memorization of the incredibly complex ritual forms, and which could still be sold to the great patrons of the time for considerable profit. It is doubtful whether the payment for schooling ever reached the level which was claimed for sacrifice ³²⁾—"The king caused all objects obtaining of the face of the earth to be made of gold, and on the occasion of this great horse-sacrifice, he gave them away to the Brahmanas. The king caused sixty-six thousand images of elephants to be made of gold, and on the occasion of this great horse-sacrifice, he gave them away to the Brahmanas. The entire earth adorned with jewels and gems the king caused to be covered over with gold and he gave her away to the Brahmanas."—but Yajñavalkya's thousand cows was certainly a sufficient fee for a day's discussion. ³³⁾

30) This theme is discussed by Edgerton, p. 5ff.

31) R. Tagore, *Sacrifice and other Plays*, p. 102.

32) Drona Parva 69.29-32 p. 99.

33) BU 3.1-ff Hume, p. 107ff.

The Upaniṣadic texts can be broken down into several categories which gradually reveal the true state of the times. The first group of texts revolve around the idea that knowledge is greater than sacrifice. ³⁴⁾ BU 1.5.16 ³⁵⁾ says "Now, there are of a truth three worlds—the world of men, the world of the fathers, and the world of the gods. This world of men is to be obtained by a son only, by no other means; the world of the fathers by sacrifice; the world of the gods by knowledge. The world of the gods is verily the best of the worlds. Therefore they praise knowledge." This view also occurs in the Bhisma Parva ³⁶⁾ which lauds the knowledge of Brahma as the highest state: "And he, who will study this holy conversation between us, will offer to me the sacrifice of knowledge." The idea that this is an actual repudiation of the sacrifice occurs very seldom, ³⁷⁾ however, and we may say that the problem was to redefine the place of sacrifice rather than to assure its demise.

The second group of texts parallels the first, developing the idea that austerity is greater than sacrifice. ³⁸⁾ Muṇḍaka 1.2.9-13 ³⁹⁾ is a characteristic text: "These deluded men, regarding sacrifice and works

34) Other texts on this point:

BU 1.4.9-10 p. 83 Hume, 168 R.

BU 3.8.10 p. 119 Hume

BU 6.2.15-16 p. 163 Hume ii208 M.

CU 1.10.1-1.11.9 p. 186-188 Hume

TU 2.5 p. 546 R

Katha U. 1.1.1 p. 595 R, and commentary

Katha U. 1.1.17-19 p. 602-603 R.

35) BU 1.5.16 p. 88 Hume.

36) Bhisma Parva 42.70 p. 57.

37) It does occur, nonetheless. cf. BU 3.9.6.21 and Keith's comments in *Religion and Philosophy...*, p. 514ff.

38) Other texts: BU 1.2.6-7 p. 75 Hume.

CU 4.16.1-5 p. 417 R, and commentary.

Prasna U. 1.9-10 p. 379 Hume.

BU is one of the creation myths and indicates that practicing austerities was itself a sacrifice, a view texts. We might assume that the idea of actual sacrifice was not in mind were it not for the references to the asvamedha. The fact that the point is etymological in no way reduces this problem. "He desired: 'Let me sacrifice further with a great sacrifice.' He tortured himself. He practised austerity. When he had tortured himself and practised austerity, glory and vigor went forth.... He desired: 'Would that this body of mine were fit for sacrifice.... (it swelled) 'It has become fit for sacrifice.' thought he. Therefore the horse-sacrifice is called the asvamedha." Cf. the creation myths reflected in TU 2.6 p. 287 Hume; Prasna U. 1.4 p. 378 Hume, which both convert to Prajapati practising austerities rather than sacrificing.

39) Mundaka U. 1.2.9-13 p. 677-679 R.

of merit as most important, do not know any other good. Having enjoyed (their reward) in the high place of heaven won by (their) good deeds, they enter again this world or a still lower one. But those who practice austerity and faith in the forest, the tranquil knowers who live the life of a mendicant, depart freed from sin, through the door of the sun to where dwells the immortal, imperishable person." This view is also not unique, however. BU ⁴⁰⁾ suggests that the roles of asceticism and sacrifice are similar; both lead only to the lower world of the fathers. But by the later Upaniṣads asceticism is recognized as important or even necessary in the obtaining of knowledge. It has been shown that both knowledge and austerity are greater than sacrifice; and the third set of texts defines the relationship between them by declaring that the performance of austerities leads to knowledge. ⁴¹⁾ In TU ⁴²⁾ the answer to the oft-repeated demand "Declare Brahma, sir!" is inevitably "then he said to him: 'Desire to understand Brahma by austerity...'" As a corollary to this, some texts also make it clear that knowledge will win you the rewards that at one time came from sacrifice. ⁴³⁾

Of course, these distinctions can be interpreted as being differences in the levels of knowledge, and a series of texts actually distinguish between "higher" and "lower" knowledge. ⁴⁴⁾ Maṇḍuka U pays the most attention to this concept, commenting in 1.1.4 ⁴⁵⁾ "To him then he said: 'There are two knowledges to be known—as indeed the knowers

40) BU 3.8.10; BU 4.4.22 p. 118; 143 Hume.

Mundaka U. 3.1.3 p. ii38 (M).

Mundaka 1.1.8-9 p. ii28-29 M.

Mundaka 3.2.9 p. 377 Hume.

Mundaka 1.2.11 p. ii30 M.

Maitri U. 1.2 p. 412 Hume.

Prasna U. 1.10 p. 654 R.

Kena U. 33 (4.8) p. 340 Hume.

42) TU 3.1-6 p. 290-291 Hume.

43) TU 3.10.5 p. 293 Hume.

44) Other texts:

BU 6.215-16 p. 163 Hume.

Mundaka U. 3.2.10 p. ii41 M.

Mundaka U. 1.2.1-6 367-368; 674-676; ii30-31.

R's commentary p. 669: "The (Mundaka) Upanisad states clearly the distinction between the higher knowledge of the Supreme Brahman and the lower knowledge of the empirical world. It is by this higher wisdom and not by sacrifices or worship that one can reach Brahman."

45) Mundaka U. 1.1.4 p. 672 R.

41) Other texts:

of Brahma are wont to say: a higher and also a lower. Of these, the lower is the Rgveda, the Yajur-Veda, the Soma-Veda, the Altharva-Veda, Pronunciation, Ritual, Grammar, Definition, Metrics, and Astrol-ogy. Now, the higher is that whereby that Imperishable is apprehended."

We have presented a considerable number of texts which seem to support the contention made at the beginning of this section that the Upaniṣads are in fact the literary documents of a revolt against the established ritual order. While in part this is true, nothing in the previous texts could be interpreted as an injunction to do away with sacrifice altogether. Rather, what we see seems to be a re-defining of the place of sacrifice within the total religious scheme. The movement that takes place from the earlier to the later Upaniṣads is discussed by Keith,⁴⁶⁾ who asserts (and quite rightly, we think) that what we are really witnessing is an upheaval by a body of reformers who have realized that sacrifice to a pantheon of hypostatized gods is rather absurd. This agitation takes place about the period of the earliest Upaniṣads, but by the later ones it has almost ceased. As he says, "The facts accord perfectly with a reform within the Brahmanical fold: the reformers gradually sink back into the main body, while their doctrine in some degree at least is adapted by the main body of the priests."

The results of this belief is that sacrifice should continue to be performed, but that one should be fully aware of what one is doing. This is certainly the view which would be most profitable to the Brahmins and, in the light of our earliest discussion, such a condition should be given certain legitimacy. Under the Upaniṣadic system, not only are the sacrifices still performed, but the priests also reap the considerable benefits of teaching their patrons what it all means. Thus, as Radhakrishnan⁴⁷⁾ comments: "The opposition of the Upaniṣads to the observance of rites is greatly exaggerated. . . . When performing rites we must be fully aware of what we are doing. There is a vital difference between the routine performance of rites and an understanding performance of them." A great many texts in the Upaniṣads support this view that sacrifice, albeit with knowledge, is important,⁴⁸⁾ and even

46) Keith, *Religion and Philosophy* . . . , p. 515 ff.

47) R p. 675.

48) Other texts:

CU 4.17.9 p. 226 Hume.

BU 1.3.28 p. 80 Hume

BU 6.4.1-3 p. 321 R.

enjoin us occasionally to continue the usual sacrifices. The CU ⁴⁹⁾ says: "If, without knowing this (i.e. the philosophy outlined in the previous sections), one of us offers an Agnihotra, it would be as if a man were to remove the live coals and pour his libation on dead ashes. But he who offers this Agnihotra with a full knowledge of its true purpose, he offers it in all worlds, in all beings, in all selfs..." The same belief that sacrifice is ineffectual without understanding is presented in a different way earlier: ⁵⁰⁾ "By this does the three-fold knowledge proceed. Saying Aum, one recites; saying aum, one orders; saying aum, once aloud, in honour of that syllable, with its greatness and its essence. He who know this thus, and he who knows it not, both perform with it. Knowledge and ignorance, however, are different. What, indeed, one performs with knowledge, faith and meditation, that, indeed, becomes more powerful." And Radhakrishnan's succinct commentary: "We must perform the sacrifice with knowledge and not ignorantly. We must understand what we are doing." The passage which most clearly demands the retention of our sacrificial duties occurs in Bhishma Parva 40.28: ⁵¹⁾ "He who renounces the ordinances of the Vedas, acts only under the impulse of desire. Such a man can never attain to perfection, happiness, or the highest goal." This forcefulness is substantiated by Maitri 1.1 and Müller's commentary, ⁵²⁾ which says "The performance of all the sacrifices... is to lead up in the end to a knowledge of Brahman, by rendering man fit for receiving the highest knowledge."

The coupling of the ideas of austerity and sacrifice with that of religious merit takes a rather amusing turn in the Mahabharata. We have already indicated that this work and the Upaniṣads were written in about the same period, ⁵³⁾ and that therefore considerable value is to be gained from their comparison. We have tried to do this with some

Maitri U. 6.36 p. 450 Hume

Svetasvatara U. 29.16 p. ii240-241 M.

Bhishma Parva 29.16 p. 39.

49) CU 5.24.1-3 p. 191 M.

50) CU 1.1.9-10 p. 339 R, and commentary.

51) Bhishma Parva 40.28 p. 53.

52) Maitri U. 1.1 p. 412, 795, ii287 (footnote 1) "The performance of all sacrifices, described in the Maitrayana-brahmana, is to lead up in the end to a knowledge of Brahman, by rendering man fit for receiving the highest knowledge." Cf. Manu 6.82 M.

53) Edgerton, p. 4 ff.

specificity, but loose ends yet remain to be tied together. The view of sacrifice fundamentally countenanced by the Mahabharata deviates considerably from that of the Upaniṣads. Here the idea of practising austerities is given form by the giving away of huge presents at the sacrifices. The sacrifices themselves are thought of as productive of merit or as a means of attaining desired ends. The emphasis, however, is on quantity rather than quality. The Drona Parva⁵⁴⁾ eulogizes a king by saying: "Having celebrated a thousand horse-sacrifices, a hundred rajasuya sacrifices, and numerous other Kshatriya sacrifices, in all of which he gave away vast wealth as sacrificial presents, and also having accomplished numerous daily rites from (*sic*) specific wishes, that king ultimately attained a very desirable end." Numerous other passages show the same emphasis on number and spectacle rather than understanding,⁵⁵⁾ and it seems reasonable to assume that the reform hypothesized for the Upaniṣadic thinkers was somewhat less than universal, even among the literati, even though a few elements of that reform certainly found their way into these texts.⁵⁶⁾ The converse of this belief is found in BU 1.5.2.⁵⁷⁾

In contrast to the development outlined above, the word 'sacrifice' is used in some Upaniṣadic passages in a wholly different way. These usually have the form 'X is a sacrifice,' and a number of possible meanings can be attached to them. Instead of the movement of the elements of the sacrifice outward to correspond with segments in the universe, the sacrifice as a whole has become the object. The fundamental intuition of these texts is rather elusive, and may not even be

54) Drona Parva 56.10-11 p. 89.

55) e.g. Drona Parva 57.11 p. 90.

Drona Parva 59.9-10 p. 91.

Katha U. 1.3.17 p. iii4 M.

56) Shalya Parva 36.30-47 p. 72 tells the story of a man who was afraid of dying because he had not yet performed the soma sacrifice. He is in a pit that he can't get out of, and so he conceives the idea of thinking the soma sacrifice out of the surrounding rocks and vines. "... Beholding that great beautiful ascetic the gods addressed him saying — 'We have come for our shares (in your offerings) ... The gods took them (rocks and vines that Trita had 'thought' into golden images) and were greatly delighted. Having duly received their respective shares, the denizens of heaven, pleased with him, granted him the boons he wanted. The boon, however, that he prayed for was that the gods should relieve him from his painful condition (in the pit).'"

57) BU 1.5.2 p. 86 Hume "... therefore one should not offer sacrifice (merely) to secure a wish."

completely expressible. One can only attack it from several sides and hope that the feelings of the authors about these texts are in some measure reproduced. It is unfortunate that one cannot present an elegant demonstration of their meaning, but must go at it step-wise.

The idea of self-sacrifice in the creation story has already been discussed in the early texts.⁵⁸⁾ Prajāpati's sacrifice of himself to himself takes on new meaning, however, if one begins to try to understand the ramifications of that event in everyday activity. In the inward-looking minds of the Upanisadic mystics, the realization developed that the outward expression of piety by sacrificing to the gods something which was not only already theirs, but was actually a part of the Lord of Creation, was absurd. The only sacrifices which one could honestly offer were those things which were unique to the individual and his will. Things such as the abandonment of the world, meditation, etc., leading to the highest form of sacrifice—the renunciation of one's own ego in favor of the god's. Such a view is presented by the CU:⁵⁹⁾ "Now, what people call 'sacrifice' is really the chaste life of a student of sacred knowledge . . ."

At the same moment, one must recognize that out of the original sacrifice even time was born, and in a mystic sense everything is still being sacrificed. That fundamental act of Prajāpati's was never finally completed, it is continuously going on in each one of us, as well as in every aspect of the world. Therefore by our very existence in time and space we constitute a part of that sacrificial offering of Prajāpati to

58) A consideration of the self-sacrifice texts not noted previously should probably be made. On the whole, the creation texts seem not to have changed greatly over the period of literature in question. RV 10.90 vol. 3 p. 287-289. "... Als die Götter mit Purusa als Opferrgabe das Opfer vollzogen, da war der Frühling dessen Schmelz Butter, der Sommer das Brennholz, der Herbst die Opferrgabe. Ihn besprengten (weihten) sie als das Opfer auf dem Barhis, den am Anfang geborenen Purusa. Diesen brachten die Götter, die Sadhya's und die Rsi's sich zum Opfer. Aus diesen vollständig geopfertem Opfer wurde das Opferschmalz gewonnen. Das machte er zu den in der Luft, im Wald, und in Dörfern lebenden Tieren..." In SB 5.1.1.2 and SB 3.2.2.4 (cited in James, *Sacrifice* . . . , p. 43) "As the sacrifice is the god Prajapati at his own sacrifice..." Prasna U. 1.4 p. 378 Hume; TU 2.6 p. 287 Hume. For a type of self-sacrifice in frustration and anger, see Sautika Parva 7.1-67 p. 9-12.

59) CU 8.5.1-4 p. 266, 1131. This advocates the need for brahmacarya and its equivalence to certain sacrifices. R says "This equivalence is established by ingenious etymological explanations." M explains them all, and then comments "Nothing could be more absurd." p. 1131 footnote 3.

himself. The Kausitaki U ⁶⁰) describes one facet of this insight: "As long, verily, as a person is speaking, he is not able to breathe. Then he is sacrificing breath in speech. As long, verily, as a person is breathing, he is not able to speak. Then he is sacrificing speech in breath. These two are unending, immortal obligations; whether waking or sleeping, one is sacrificing continuously, uninterruptedly..." CU ⁶¹) makes the relationship of man and sacrifice even clearer, emphasizing that the only appropriate sacrificial gifts are those arising from man's ethical freedom: "Verily, a person is a sacrifice. His (first) twenty-four years are the mid-day libation...the next forty-eight years are the third libation... When one hungers and thirsts and does not enjoy himself — that is a Preparatory Consecration Ceremony (diksa). When one eats and drinks and enjoys himself—then he joins in the Upasada ceremonies. When one laughs and eats and practices sexual intercourse—then he joins in the Chant and Recitation. Austerity, alms-giving, uprightness, harmlessness, truthfulness — these are one's gifts for the priests... Death is an ablution after the ceremony." BU and Maitri U ⁶²) also have texts mirroring this understanding. The BU especially expresses in a beautiful passage the sacrificial aspect of the universe.

If we recognize the importance of self-discipline rather than deductive thought in the search for Brahman, and the correspondance between sacrifice and this austerity, then we may also equate sacrifice with the mystic purification of our Self which it produces. Our imperfections and our attachments are offered up by the sacrificer in an attempt to create within himself a center of spiritual purification. The asva-medha at the beginning of the BU ⁶³) is a sacrifice of the world instead of the horse in an attempt, by the sacrificer, to attain spiritual

60) Daushitaki U. 2.5 p. 310 Hume.

61) CU 3.16.1-7; 3.17.1-7 p. 394-397 R.

62) BU 6.3.9-16 p. 312 R. "Yonder world, verily, is a sacrificial fire, O Gautama. The sun in truth is its fuel; the light-rays, smoke; the day, the flame; the quarters of heaven, the coals; the intermediate quarters, the sparks; In this fire the gods offer faith. From this oblation King Soma arises... A rain cloud, verily, is a sacrificial fire... this world... man... woman..."

See also Maitri U. 6.34 p. 844 R.

BU 1.4.16 p. 85 Hume.

BU 3.1.1-9 p. 107-109 Hume

Shalya Parva 60.26-27 p. 114 also may be a reflection of this understanding.

63) BU 1.1.1 ff. p. 149 R.

completeness. A reflection of this apprehension of the universe is in Chandogya 4.16.1: 64) "Verily, he who purifies here (i.e. wind) is a sacrifice. Truly, when he moves, he purifies this whole world, therefore indeed he is a sacrifice."

It seems clear, in light of the numerous instances of sacrifice in Indian literature in general and Upaniṣadic literature in particular, that a model which attempts to classify and treat all such instances in the same way can hardly be considered academically efficacious. Moreover, it has been suggested in the foregoing examination that while the notion of sacrifice in Upaniṣadic literature can not be accurately given an account without appeal to the other supporting documents to which it is tied, the Upaniṣads introduce a whole new conceptual scheme in which the function of sacrifice is radically altered. Thus, the endeavor to tease out, so to speak, the place of sacrifice in Indian literature requires a careful scrutiny of the individual contexts in which sacrifice is found rather than the continued search for a model which has the capacity to transcend contextual boundaries.

64) CU 4.16.1 p. 417 R.

A REASSESSMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF IBO TRADITIONAL RELIGION

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One important concept common to humanity is the religious concept: the idea that there is in existence a transcendental being on whom all created things are dependent, and the need for man to worship this being as the lord of all things. All the races of mankind, throughout the ages had manifested this religious sentiment. The Jews, Christians and Mohammedans, have a monotheistic conception of this transcendental being called Jehovah by the Jews, God by the Christians and Allah by the Moslems. In Iboland, under the traditional religion, there was a conception of the transcendental being, God. This transcendental being, Himself a spirit, was associated with many lesser spirits, to which the term "gods" or "deities", had been given by many writers. The use of this term had led to the belief that the Ibos of the traditional religion were polytheists and that their religion was polytheism¹). It is necessary to show whether or not the Ibos of the old religion were really polytheists.

"*Chi*" in Ibo traditional religion means an individual's guardian spirit, known in Christian theology as guardian angel. When the word "*chi*" is compounded with the word "*neke*" (create), the result is a compound word "*Chi-neke*", the Spirit that creates, Creator Spirit, meaning God, the author of the universe; God is also designated as "*Chi-ukwu*" (spelt usually as '*Chukwu*') formed by compounding the words '*chi*' and "*ukwu*" (great or supreme), meaning the great or supreme *Chi*, to distinguish the Creator *Chi* (God) from the ordinary *chi*, an individual's guardian spirit²). According to Ibo traditional

1) See Geoffrey Parrinder, *West African Religion*, (Epworth Press, London, 2nd ed., 1961), p. 11.

2) Ibid., pp. 12, 19, 21; E. O. Egbah, "The Beginning of the End of Traditional Religion in Iboland", *West African Religion*, No. 9 of 1971, p. 1; C. K. Meek,

religion, the Supreme God (*Chukwu*) is the creator of the Universe, the author of rain, the growing crops and the maker of the human soul; the controller of life and the world; hence the name, '*Chineke*' — Creator God — had been given to Him. Writing on the Ibo traditional religion, Parrinder said: "God is creator (*Chi-na-eke*), the author of heaven and earth, the one who sends rain, the maker of the growing crops and the source of the human soul . . . God who controls life, He that makes and controls the world" ³). The lesser spirits played no part in creation; their role in life was protective: they gave protection to what had already been created by *Chineke*; they were *Chineke's* (*Chukwu's*) creatures and messengers. Commenting on the fact that *Chineke* created the spirits, Arinze said: "*Chukwu kelu gi kee chi nwe gi* (God created you and created your personal *chi*), say the Ibos to the proud man who forgets that the heavens are over our heads" ⁴).

To *Chineke* therefore, *chi* was a lesser being, and as pointed out above, *chi* was an individual's guardian spirit, and it was believed by the traditional religionists that every person had his own *chi* ⁵) which protected him against evil, and ensured his prosperity in life. If he was fortunate in life, the good fortune was always attributed to his *chi* through whom *Chineke* had bestowed the good fortune on the individual: "*Chi ya nyere ya*" — his *chi* "bestowed" it on him. If he was unfortunate, it was generally believed that his *chi* had not co-operated with him, "*Chi ya ekweghi*". Such an unfortunate person was known as "*Onye ajo chi*" ⁶). During prosperity, thanksgiving offerings could be made to *chi* in appreciation of the blessing received through him. In times of adversity, propitiatory offerings could be made to "appease" *chi's* anger in order to receive "his" blessing. Followers of

The Religions of Nigeria, *Africa*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, 1943, p. 112; G. T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria* (Frank Cass New Impression, 1966) pp. 215-16; Francis A. Arinze, *Sacrifice in Ibo Religion*, (Ibadan Univ. Press, 1970), p. 9. *Chukwu* is also known as *Olisa* (*Orisa*, *Orisha*) or *Osebuluwa*. See G. T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, op. cit., pp. 215-16; See Thomas Hodgkin (Ed.), *Nigerian Perspectives* (O.U.P. 1960), p. 271; *Africa*, vol. XXVI, 1956, pp. 17-18.

3) See Parrinder op. cit., p. 21; Amaury Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, Vol. II (O.U.P., 1926) p. 40?

4) See Arinze, op. cit., pp. 10, 12-13; *Africa*, Vol. XXVI 1956, p. 23.

5) See Arinze, op. cit., p. 15; *Africa*, Vol. XXVI, op. cit., p. 20; Geoffrey Parrinder, *West African Psychology*, (Lutterworth Press, London, 1951), pp. 65-6.

6) Arinze, p. 13.

the traditional religion had shrines of *chi* within their compounds, and it was before the shrines that the offerings were made.

One other lesser spirit of importance, was *Ala* or *Ani* the earth spirit, whose duty was to see that crops and fruit trees were productive to ensure a good harvest and abundant food for the society. It was also believed that it was with the assistance of *Ala* that women gave birth to children. According to Parrinder, *Ala* "is the great Mother Goddess, the spirit of fertility . . ." ⁷⁾ The adherents of the traditional religion kept shrines and images of *Ala* and annually performed elaborate rites in her honour in order to obtain her protection over crops and women of child-bearing age. In Talbot's view, "As Goddess of the earth and of fertility, *Ala* receives special sacrifices at the time of planting, at first fruits and at full harvest" ⁸⁾. Destruction of crops or stealing of them was viewed by traditional religionists as a very serious criminal offence (*Nso Ala*), an abomination against *Ala*, because such an act amounted to a negation of the good work of *Ala*, a negation which could result in serious hardship to those affected. Apart from giving protection to crops, *Ala* acted as the custodian of morality; "she is the giver and administrator of moral laws and priests are guardians of public morality on her behalf" ⁹⁾. She was the guardian spirit of the purity of both the body and soul of an individual; and as Edmund Ilogu has rightly pointed out, "Homicide, adultery, especially incest . . . are considered as *Nso Ala*, an abomination" ¹⁰⁾. Offences against *Ala* were serious and to appease her the whole community would join in a public sacrifice of propitiation and acts of restitution. Before the introduction of christianity an offender against *Ala* could be killed outright, probably buried alive or sold into slavery ¹¹⁾. Although it was said that the offences were "against" *Ala*, they were in reality against *Chukwu*. According to Basden, certain actions such as murder, theft and adultery were estimated offences against God, *Chukwu* ¹²⁾. The

7) Ibid., p. 38. See also P. Amaury Talbot, *The People of Southern Nigeria*, Vol. II, op. cit., pp. 43, 104-5.

8) Talbot, p. 37.

9) Ibid.

10) Edmund Ilogu, "Christian Ethics in Nigeria's Non-Christian Background" in *West African Religion*, No. 9 of 1971, p. 32. See also Parrinder, *West African Religion*, op. cit., p. 37.

11) See Edmund Ilogu, op. cit., p. 32.

12) See Basden, op. cit., p. 216.

offences therefore were against *Ala* only in a secondary sense, that the offender had offended *Ala*, whom *Chukwu* had asked to be the guardian of the virtues violated by the offender. To illustrate this point the following example may be cited. If a man's property was stolen, the thief who stole the property committed an offence against the owner of the property, but in actual fact the offence was primarily against *Chukwu*, the property owner's creator, and the bestower of the property on the owner, and who had commanded: "Thou shalt not steal". The offence was therefore against the property owner only in a secondary sense.

Ala was the guardian spirit of fertility and productivity. Hence adherents of the traditional religion had to offer sacrifices to it to have good harvests, and children; it was the belief of the traditional religionists that, as the guardian appointed by *Chukwu*, *Ala* had the power to obtain for them from *Chukwu*, the blessings which they asked of *Chukwu* through *Ala*, the guardian spirit, of the good things they had asked for.

Another lesser spirit of importance was the ancestral spirit — the spirit of a dead ancestor. It is the belief of Ibos of the traditional religion that people who lived a good life¹³⁾ on earth, would after death, join the company of the good spirits (blessed company) in the next world¹⁴⁾; the souls of those who led a bad life would be admitted into the company of the bad spirits in hell. Traditional

13) To a traditional religionist "good life" did not only mean a "holy life" that is, a good spiritual life; it also meant exemplary social and economic life; intelligence and industry came into it.

14) See Arinze, op. cit., p. 17. It was believed by traditional religionists that before the soul of a dead good man could be admitted into the "company of the good", the second burial funeral rites had to be performed for the dead person; if this was not done, the soul could not gain admission, and could for ever be excluded unless the rites were performed, the soul "would wander homeless and return to make life unpleasant for his relatives" who had failed to perform the rites. See Francis Arinze, op. cit., p. 29; see also G. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Southern Nigeria*, op. cit., pp. 18-21. According to Basden, Ibos believed that: "when men have run their course in this world, they return to their master — the Supreme Being — and live with him in the spirit world". See Basden, op. cit., p. 119. Writing about the religion of Abo, W.B. Baikie said: "Abo people believe that after death, those who have been good on earth may... go to Orissa [Orisa] and abide with him... if on the other hand, a wicked man dies, it is understood that he is driven to *Okomo* or hell". See Thomas Hodgkin, op. cit., p. 271.

religionists performed special rites in honour of the spirits of the departed ancestors. They invoked these holy spirits in their prayers and asked for "their" blessing and protection and offered sacrifices in their honour. Although the traditional religionists directed their prayers to the ancestral spirits, "the general belief", according to Arinze, was that the ancestral spirits were intermediaries who relayed the prayers to Chukwu, God ¹⁵). This means that the traditional religionist's practice of praying to *Chukwu* through the ancestral spirits, is not unlike the Christian practice of praying to God through the saints, and the traditional religionist worshipped God through the ancestral spirits just as the Christian worshipped God through the saints.

Ibo traditional religionists during their life-time had strongly hoped to be honoured as good ancestors after death, and to achieve this honour, they endeavoured during their life-time to live a good life. It was their wish that their children should also live a good life. It seemed that the intense desire to be like the ancestors who had lived good lives on earth, made traditional religionists believe in reincarnation. The doctrine of reincarnation appears to be an expression of an irresistible urge in traditional religionists to have their lives patterned on those of departed good ancestors; they seemed to have believed that this could be achieved by assuming the personalities of their ancestors and identifying themselves spiritually with the ancestors, and placing themselves under the ancestral protection, so that through the ancestral patronage they could live good lives, and after death, be admitted into the company of the good ancestors, and not that the soul of an ancestor returned to the world to be reincarnated in another individual. This explanation appears to throw some light on the Ibo conception of reincarnation. If the spirits of the ancestors were believed to come back really into the world to be reincarnated, then, the ancestral cult would cease in respect of an ancestor, the moment the reincarnation had taken place. But according to traditional practice, the ancestral cult continued after reincarnation had occurred, thus showing that it was not the soul of the ancestor that really came back. And again according to the belief of the

15) Arinze, op. cit., pp. 19, 50. It should be pointed out that the ancestors honoured by the traditional religionists, and whose names they invoked in their prayers, were not the wicked ones, who could not be admitted into "the Spirit land" but "only the good ancestors who had reached the spirit land". Ibid., p. 18.

traditional religionists, as discovered by the writer during his field work, an ancestor was capable of plural reincarnation. If it was the soul of the ancestor that really returned, then plural reincarnation would be impossible since an ancestor had only one soul. It does not seem to me therefore that reincarnation should be given a literal interpretation. And when traditional religionists spoke of reincarnation, it should not be understood that it was the soul of an ancestor that had been reincarnated in a child. "It is not strictly the ancestral spirit that is born but the child is supposed to come under his particular influence and to receive part of his vitality and qualities" ¹⁶). Thus it was not the individual soul of the ancestor that returned to be reincarnated; rather the person in whom the reincarnation was supposed to have taken place, had placed himself spiritually under the guidance and protection of the ancestral spirit which could enable him to acquire the good qualities of the ancestor.

To illustrate the point a brief account of how a "reincarnating" ancestor was made known, might be given. After a child was born, one of the parents preferably the father ¹⁷), would consult a diviner, *nwadibia*, to determine the ancestor who had been "reincarnated" in the child. The client at the request of the diviner, would give the names of his departed ancestors, with some information on the character of these ancestors. Then the diviner after "communing" with the spirits, would announce the name of the ancestor that had "returned"; the diviner, having studied the character of the client's ancestors, made sure that he did not announce the name of an ancestor of bad character ¹⁸). "If the *dibia* has announced the return of an ancestor who was popular, the latter is welcomed and the baby in whom he now resides, made much of, but should he have left unpleasant memories, the *dibia* is quickly told to try again, or the family goes off to another *dibia* hoping for a better luck" ¹⁹). After the name of a good ancestor had been given, the client would return home and announce it to the

16) Ibid., pp. 17-18.

17) Someone else, not a parent but a relation could be delegated to do the consultation on behalf of the parents.

18) Cf. Arinze, p. 17. The diviner of course did not perform this service free; he charged a fee which was subject to negotiation.

19) Sylvia Leith-Rose, *African Women*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1939), p. 101.

members of the family, with joy, and they would call the child by the ancestor's name. If the ancestor's name was *Ogbuagu* (Tiger-killer), the child automatically became known as *Ogbuagu*. Occasionally, especially when a child misbehaved, the parents, in an attempt to correct him would scold him and make some reference to the good life of the ancestor who had been "reincarnated" in him and would blame him for not behaving like that ancestor, and exhort him to live up to the ancestor's reputation. This usually had influenced the conduct of most people.

This practice seems to bear some resemblance to a common Baptismal practice among Christians. At Baptism, Christians had chosen the names of saints in Heaven and not those of sinners in Hell; the saints whose names were chosen became their patrons, interceded for them before God in Heaven, and obtained for them from God the necessary help to enable them to live like their patron saints so that they too could gain Heaven after death.

In addition to the three lesser spirits discussed above, mention may be made of another lesser spirit, the special village spirit: *arusi* or *alusi* ²⁰). In Iboland under the traditional religion, each village had a special *arusi*, whose duty was to give special protection to the village ²¹). An *arusi* had a shrine where its image was kept for veneration. Annually the villagers celebrated a feast in honour of the village *arusi*. During the celebration, sacrifices were "offered" to it at its shrine by the people, who, during the sacrifices, offered thanks to it for all the help it had "rendered" to them in the past, and prayed to it for more protection in the future, and at the same time asked for forgiveness for the offences they had committed. Like the other lesser spirits, an *arusi's* role was intermediary, it interceded for the people before *Chukwu* and obtained favours for them from Him. As Arinze has succinctly pointed out, "the Ibos need no one to tell them that without God, not even the strongest *alusi* (spirit) can do anything" ²²).

20) See Talbot. *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, op. cit., pp. 79, 109; *Africa*, vol. XXVI, op. cit., p. 19. Apart from the four lesser spirits discussed above, there are a host of others, some good, some evil. See Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, op. cit., pp. 138-148; Arinze, op. cit., pp. 13-14; Parrinder, *West African Religion*, op. cit., pp. 27, 33, 44; Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, op. cit., pp. 215-16.

21) A village could have more than one *arusi*. For an account of *arusi*, see Arinze, op. cit., pp. 13, 14, 19, 49, 56.

22) Arinze, op. cit., p. 10-11.

We may pause here to examine the attitude of the people to the Supreme God, the Christian God, *Chineke* or *Chiukwu*, and the relationship between *Chineke* and the lesser spirits. As has been shown, the lesser spirits had shrines and images made in their honour, and sacrifices were "offered" to them regularly at the shrines. Unfortunately however, the Ibos of the traditional religion, generally speaking, did not make images of the Supreme God, nor did they erect shrines in His honour, and for His worship. According to Parrinder, "There are no temples or priests of *Chukwu*"²³). They however, said ejaculatory prayers directly to Him²⁴), asking for His protection and thanking Him for favours received, and it was believed that *Chukwu* was the final recipient of the sacrifices offered by traditional religionists through the intermediary of the spirits²⁵). Moreover the Ibos recognized God's attributes, and this had been in personal Ibo names such as *Chukwuka* — God is the greatest; *Chukwukere* — God created; *Chukwuma* — God is all-knowing; — *Chukwunenye* — God the giver; *Chukwuamaka* — God is goodness; *Chukwulozie* — a prayer to God,

23) Geoffrey Parrinder, *West African Religion*, op. cit., p. 22. It should however be pointed out that only in a general sense could Parrinder's statement cited above be correct. The Ibos as a rule, did not have temples, and priests of the Supreme God, nor did they erect shrines in His honour. But in Aro-Chukwu, there was a shrine called *Ibini-Ukpabi* ("the Long Juju"). The people of Aro-Chukwu maintained that *Ibini-Ukpabi* was a shrine erected in honour of *Chukwu* (the Supreme God) whom they claimed was their Father, as is suggested by the name *Umu-Chukwu* (children of God) by which the Aro people were popularly known throughout Ibo-land, and up to a point, are still known today. Parrinder himself is in agreement with these views and is of the opinion that the Aro people "hold their oracle [the Long Juju] to be the supreme deity and offered slaves to him with prayers for the aversion of sickness" — Parrinder, p. 22. Unfortunately, however, Parrinder did not include this in his list of exceptions before his conclusion that, "apart from Ashanti, where temples and priests of the Supreme God (*Nnyame*) are in existence, there are no temples or priests of God" in West Africa. See Parrinder, pp. 15, 22, 24, 25. Commenting on "the Aro-Chukwu Oracle", W. B. Baikie said it was "the celebrated shrine of Tshukwu [Chukwu]". According to him, "The Igbos [Ibos] all believe in an almighty being, omnipresent and omnipotent, whom they call Tshukwu [Chukwu] whom they constantly worship and whom they believe to communicate directly with them through his sacred shrine at Aro'. Thomas Hodgkin, op. cit., pp. 270-71.

24) See Arinze, p. 11; also Talbot, *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria*, vol. II, op cit., p. 40.

25) See Parrinder, *West African Religion*, p. 22. See Arinze, p. 19, 50.

meaning, may God think for me; *Chukwudi* — God is; *Chukwuemeke* — thanksgiving to God, meaning “Thanks to God for His goodness”; *Chukwunweike* — God, source of strength; *Chukwudike* — God, the all powerful ²⁶). The explanation for the non-existence of shrines for the Supreme God, is this: the people regarded *Chukwu* as being so far away that He was not as directly connected with their daily lives on earth as were the lesser spirits, His creatures and servants, whom He appointed to look after man and his affairs on earth ²⁷). It seems that the people envisaged a sort of feudal relationship in which the Supreme God was the Overlord, and the lesser spirits, His vassals, and the “pagans”, the serfs of the vassals and subjects of the Overlord, the Supreme God. In a feudal society, the central authority, the king, was far away from the serfs, his subjects, with the result that although they respected and honoured him, there was not between the king and the serfs, that close personal attachment, which existed between the king’s representatives — his vassals or tenants-in-chief and the serfs directly under them, and to whom they owed feudal services in return for protection given them. The people seemed to have adopted this feudal relationship in their dealings with the spirit world. They seemed to have thought less of the Supreme God, so far away from them and more of the lesser spirits, so close to them, and this was responsible for the apparent lack of prominence given to the Supreme God by the people in their daily lives, and the conspicuous show of respect and honour, by them to the lesser spirits. The people, however, believed that the homage paid to the lesser spirits, was accepted and borne by them to the Supreme God who alone had the power to grant the people’s petitions. Commenting on the intermediary role of the spirit, Arinze said: “For the Ibo pagans, there is an atmosphere of mystery about *Chukwu*. They are not sure how exactly to worship Him. His awe and mystery perplex them. He is entirely transcendent. Hence they think it more courteous and more within man’s range to appeal to the spirits to obtain requests from God” ²⁸). To the traditional religionists, “the spirits are above man but below God. They or at least the good spirits are God’s messengers . . . The spirits are all created by God . . . When they pray to the spirits or offer sacrifice to them, they sometimes tell

26) See Arinze, p. 9.

27) Parrinder, *West African Religion*, p. 23; *Africa*, vol. XIV, op. cit., p. 113.

28) Arinze, op. cit., p. 10.

the spirits expressly to intercede for them before *Chukwu*" 29). Commenting on the superiority of *Chukwu* to the other spirits, and on the intermediary role of these spirits, Parrinder wrote: "it is said that He [Chukwu] is the final recipient of the sacrifices offered through the intermediary of other gods" 30). According to C. K. Meek, "He [Chukwu] is the ultimate recipient of all sacrifices. Thus if a sacrifice is offered to *Anyangu* [Anyanwu] the sun, the priest asks Anyangu [Anyanwu] to accept the sacrifice and bear it to *Chukwu*" 31). Expressing the views that *Chukwu* created both the spirits and human beings, Talbot said: "The Supreme Deity called *Chi* or *Chineke* (*China-eke*, the Creator) by Ibos is held, through almost the whole region as the Power at the back of everything — the great First Cause from which gods and men have sprung" 32). This is precisely the reason why Ibos of the traditional religion called *Chukwu* "Father of the gods" 33), and not the naive suggestion by Parrinder that the people called *Chukwu* the Father of the lesser spirits because it was "not unnatural to look on the sky as father of all because it is literally higher than all", nor his misleading suggestion that, "father" also often indicates belief in the most ancient god; other members of the pantheon adopted later became "wives" or "sons" 34).

On the traditional religionist's belief that the spirits were *Chukwu*'s servants, Basden said: "At His service [Chukwu's] are many ministering spirits whose sole business is to fulfil His commands" 35).

From the foregoing, certain conclusions have emerged. Firstly that the Ibos of the traditional religion believed in the existence of *Chukwu* or *Chineke*, the Supreme Spirit, God, and Almighty Being, omnipresent and omnipotent 36); secondly that although they also believed in the existence of other spirits, they believed that these other spirits were inferior to the Supreme Spirit, God, and were in fact His creatures;

29) Ibid., pp. 12-13.

30) Parrinder, *West African Religion*, op. cit., p. 22.

31) See *Africa*, vol. XIV, op. cit., p. 113; Parrinder *West African Religion*, op. cit., p. 27.

32) A. Talbot, *Tribes of the Niger Delta* (Frank Cass, New Impression, 1967), p. 19.

33) Parrinder, *West African Religion*, op. cit., p. 24; Arinze, op. cit., p. 13.

34) Parrinder, p. 24.

35) Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria*, op. cit., p. 215.

36) Thomas Hodgkin, op. cit., p. 271.

the work of creation was not attributed to them but to the Supreme Spirit, *Chineke*. Although they "offered" sacrifice to the lesser spirits, the sacrifices were offered with the intention that the lesser spirits would bear them to *Chineke* for whom they were ultimately intended; in other words that the lesser spirits were the messengers or servants of *Chineke*, their father³⁷), on whose order, and with whose power they performed protective functions in man's interest. These lesser spirits appeared to have performed the type of function attributed to angels and saints in the christian religion. The nature and position of *Chineke* in relation to the lesser spirits, in the theology of the traditional religion, seems to suggest that the traditional religion of the Ibos was not really polytheism, but a type of veiled monotheism which has not been fully investigated and understood. If it is true that the sacrifices which were "offered" to the lesser spirits, were really offered not to them but to *Chineke*, the Supreme God through the lesser spirits, it follows that the Ibos of the traditional religion did not really worship the lesser spirits, but *Chineke*, and that the lesser spirits including ancestral spirits (saints of the traditional religion) were to them what angels and saints are to the christians. It may be recalled that christians especially Roman Catholics had said, and still say prayers to God through the angels and the saints, who carried the prayers to God on behalf of those who prayed. When Christians did this, they worshipped not the angels, and the saints, but God who alone had the power to grant their prayers through the intercession of the saints and angels.

A word or two may be said on the apparatus used by the traditional religionists during worship. Extensive use was made of symbols such as trees or stones of a particular type, and images (carved objects) of various sorts. The use of these objects had led most non-Africans to think that Ibos of the traditional religion believed that the objects had personal souls or that they were "gods" and worshipped as such by the people. This, however, is a wrong conception, and a gross misunderstanding of Ibo religious beliefs and practices. The people did not believe that the objects had souls; they did not believe that they were their "gods" and therefore did not give them the honour and worship which they gave to *Chineke* through the lesser spirits. To believe that

37) Parrinder, *West African Religion*, op. cit., p. 24, Arinze, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

the objects had souls or that they were "gods", would be irrational. The correct position is this: the people worshipped *Chineke* through the lesser spirits which were invisible; since they could not see them because of their spiritual character, they made symbols or images of them, and placed the images in the spirits' shrines³⁸). When therefore they worshipped before the images or symbols, they did not worship the images/symbols but *Chineke*, through the spirits whose images or symbols were before them³⁹). To illustrate this, a christian practice may be cited. A christian believes that God is everywhere, and when he worships God, who as a Spirit is everywhere, he does not worship, the place, say a house, where God as a Spirit can exist; what he worships is God who as a Spirits exists in the house. In the same way, a christian, (Roman Catholic) who worshipped before an image of Jesus Christ, did not worship the image but Jesus Christ, whose image was before him. The argument here is of course not intended as a defence of the traditional religion but an attempt to remove the irrationality and naivety with which most non-Africans had tended to approach religious beliefs and practices in Africa⁴⁰).

38) See Edwin W. Smith (ed.), *African Ideas of God* (London, 1950), p. 13. When an Ibo man swore on an image of an *Arusi*, it was not the wooden image that was supposed to harm the person, if he was guilty, but the *Arusi* which had the image. As Geoffrey Parrinder has rightly pointed out, "no heathen in his blindness bows down to wood or stone". Parrinder, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9; 62. See also Edwin W. Smith (ed.), pp. 12, 15.

39) See E. O. Egbah's paper in *West African Religion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3. The image serves as a visual aid to enable the worshipper to concentrate more on Jesus Christ whom he worships. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

40) See E. O. Egbah's paper in *West African Religion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

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PROFESSOR E. O. JAMES

1888-1972

Edwin Oliver James, doyen of British scholars in the field of the history of religions, died in hospital on 6 July 1972 after a motor car accident at the age of 84 years. Educated at University College School he started his academic career as a chemist, but quite soon turned to anthropology, which he read at Exeter College, Oxford, under the late R. R. Marett; and later he researched for his Ph.D. degree at University College, London, under the late Sir W. Flinders Petrie. About this time he was also associated with Elliott Smith and W. J. Perry, whose controversial pan-Egyptian diffusionism he was never entirely happy with and of which Petrie strongly disapproved. James rarely adopted a doctrinaire position, but was content to present different scholars' theories and suggest a mid-way assessment.

Always a devout and faithful Churchman of the older Anglo-Catholic school, he was ordained to the priesthood by the Bishop of Ripon in 1912, and served in a number of English parishes as far afield as Yorkshire, the East End of London and the Thames Valley for over twenty years. During this period he began his voluminous output of publications with his *Primitive Ritual and Belief* (1917); and he undertook part-time teaching of anthropology, notably at Cambridge from 1928 to 1933. His long association with the Folk Lore Society, of which he became president, goes back to this time.

In 1933 he was appointed the first professor of the history and philosophy of religion in the University of Leeds, and also became a well-known visiting lecturer in other universities. His lectures at the University College of North Wales and elsewhere formed the basis of a useful textbook, *Comparative Religion: An Introductory and Historical Survey* (1938). Earlier he had collaborated with S. H. Hooke in the much discussed myth and ritual theory of the religions of the ancient Near East, a subject to which he returned in his *Christian Myth and Ritual* (1934) and *Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East* (1958).

After ten years at Leeds he moved to a chair at London, and was elected a fellow of King's College. On his retirement in 1955 he went to live permanently at Oxford, and from 1960 was chaplain of All Souls College. His writings had earned him a doctorate of letters at Oxford, and in 1939 he was made a doctor of divinity *honoris causa* by the University of St Andrews.

Even a list of his publications would occupy several pages. Many are textbooks or confections of other scholars' works. Perhaps his most original earlier work was his *Origins of Sacrifice* (1934). *The Social Function of Religion* (1940) also appeared subsequently in a French edition. *The Concept of Deity* (1950) embodies his Wilde lectures at Oxford, and is his main excursion into the philosophy of religion. Among his books which have appeared in the major European languages are *The Nature and Function of Priesthood* (1940), *Pre-historic Religion* (1957), *The Cult of the Mother Goddess* (1959), and *The Ancient Gods* (1960). He was a familiar figure in the Bodleian Library at Oxford; and he continued to produce books and articles until a short time before his death.

His membership and active support of learned societies, as well as his annual archaeological expeditions to prehistoric sites on the continent of Europe, brought him into contact with scholars of many countries. He attended most of the History of Religions Congresses of the past few decades; and I had the privilege of collaborating with him in 1954 in founding the British section of the International Association for the History of Religions, the promotion of which had been warmly urged on us both by the late Professor R. Pettazzoni of Rome. James was held in such affection and esteem that the late Professor S. G. F. Brandon and others presented him with a Festschrift, *The Saviour God*, to commemorate his seventy-fifth birthday. That volume contains a full bibliography of his writings up to 1963.

His friends and colleagues in many countries are glad to have known this gentle, kindly scholar. He was an exacting teacher and examiner; but his hidden warmth and quiet sense of humour are well exemplified by the story of the humane way in which he dealt with an attractive but not very bright girl student, whose examination papers her own tutor thought must fail her. He referred the case to E. O. James, the external examiner that year, who, having read the scripts and interviewed her, said in his slow, reflective fashion after

she had left, "Pretty little thing, wasn't she? What would be the lowest mark that would get her through?" And that was the mark he decided on.

He is survived by a son and by his widow, herself an enthusiastic student of religions and a devoted sharer in his work, pastoral as well as academic, and in his travels. It was typical of him that, despite his dedication to scholarship to the end, he cared for her during her illhealth over the latter years. Our sympathy goes out to her, as does our gratitude for the life, work and companionship of so unassuming, assiduous and diligent an authority in his subject.

D. W. GUNDRY

S. G. F. BRANDON

(1907-1971)

Le décès du Professeur Brandon est survenu dans des circonstances particulièrement dramatiques. Brandon, accompagné de sa femme, faisait un voyage d'étude en Egypte lorsqu'il fut victime d'une grave intoxication alimentaire, qui entraîna bientôt une défaillance rénale. Il mourut le 29 Octobre 1971, entre Le Caire et Rome, à bord de l'avion qui le ramenait en Angleterre pour y être soigné. Il était âgé de 64 ans. L'IAHR l'avait élu, lors du Congrès de Stockholm en 1970, Secrétaire Général. La perspective de collaborer étroitement avec un homme auquel m'unissait une amitié vieille de plus de vingt ans m'avait beaucoup aidé à vaincre mes hésitations et mes scrupules lorsque, à ce même Congrès, la confiance de nos collègues m'appela à la Présidence de notre Association. J'étais loin de me douter alors que l'un de mes premiers actes officiels dans ces fonctions consisterait à évoquer ici les étapes de sa carrière et les aspects de son œuvre.

S. G. F. Brandon était né dans le Devonshire en 1907. Il fit ses études supérieures à l'Université de Leeds et reçut parallèlement une formation théologique au Collège de la Résurrection de Mirfield, l'un des foyers les plus notoires de l'anglo-catholicisme contemporain. Ordonné prêtre de l'Eglise anglicane en 1932, il assuma ensuite, pendant sept ans, la charge d'une paroisse dans l'Ouest de l'Angleterre. Pendant la guerre de 1939-45, il participa comme aumônier militaire à la retraite de Dunkerque, ainsi qu'aux campagnes d'Afrique du Nord et d'Italie. Après la fin des hostilités, il resta dans l'armée et prit part à l'occupation alliée en Autriche. Mais déjà le goût de la recherche scientifique s'affirmait chez lui, de plus en plus impérieux, à travers les préoccupations pastorales. Un noyau de bibliothèque personnelle l'accompagnait, dans des caisses à munitions, d'étape en étape. C'est en pleine guerre que Brandon obtint, au cours d'une permission, le grade de Docteur en Théologie (D.D.), avec un travail qui, considérablement amplifié et remanié, parut en 1951 sous le titre *Time and Mankind*, la même année que *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church*. Ces deux ouvrages l'imposèrent d'emblée à l'attention du monde savant. Ils déter-

minèrent à la fois un changement décisif dans sa carrière, faisant du *padre* un professeur, et les deux directions majeures, histoire des origines chrétiennes et histoire comparée des religions, dans lesquelles ses activités de recherche allaient désormais s'engager. L'Université de Manchester lui confia d'emblée, sans qu'il eût exercé de fonctions académiques préalables, cette chaire de *Comparative Religion* qu'il occupa jusqu'à sa mort et à laquelle il sut donner un rayonnement exceptionnel.

Son œuvre scientifique se développa et s'épanouit dès lors avec une régularité admirable. A ses deux travaux liminaires, et sans parler de très nombreux articles dans divers périodiques savants, s'ajoutent, entre 1962 et 1968, six ouvrages majeurs, soit en moyenne presque un par an. Quatre se rapportent à l'histoire comparée des religions : *Man and his Destiny in the great Religions* (1962), issu pour l'essentiel de *Wilde Lectures in Natural and Comparative Religion* données par l'auteur à l'Université d'Oxford de 1954 à 1957 ; *Creation Legends of the Ancient Near East* (1963) ; *History, Time and Deity* (1965) et enfin *The Judgment of the Dead* (1967). Dans les deux autres, *Jesus and the Zealots* (1967) et *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth* (1968), Brandon revient à ces problèmes d'origines chrétiennes qui l'avait tout d'abord attiré et qu'il a marqués d'une empreinte si personnelle. Rappelons enfin qu'il assumait en 1970, comme éditeur, la responsabilité d'un *Dictionary of Comparative Religion*, dont il rédigea lui-même un nombre considérable d'articles.

Tout ce que Brandon a écrit se caractérise par une érudition solide et sans défaut, un souci minutieux de la précision et une ampleur de vues également remarquables. Dans ce vaste domaine de l'histoire des religions, qui représente une tentation permanente pour les amateurs de généralisations hâtives, il était prémuni contre tout amateurisme. En un temps où la spécialisation paraît répondre à une impérieuse nécessité, il a su en éviter les excès. Il représentait vraiment la *Comparative Religion*, c'est-à-dire qu'au lieu de limiter ses recherches à une religion ou à une famille de religions apparentées, selon la tradition qui reste, aujourd'hui encore, prépondérante dans mon pays par exemple, et plus particulièrement à l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes de Paris, il s'efforçait d'embrasser un secteur aussi large que possible et d'étudier dans sa spécificité, mais aussi dans toute la variété de ses manifestations, le fait religieux.

S'il se sentait particulièrement à l'aise dans l'antiquité classique et proche-orientale, biblique et chrétienne, c'est-à-dire dans les civilisations dont celle de l'Occident moderne est en quelque mesure tributaire, il ne s'interdisait pas cependant de prolonger parfois ses enquêtes du côté de l'Inde et de la Chine et se refusait à prendre les conceptions occidentales et chrétiennes comme critère et pierre de touche. Il était moins préoccupé de déceler d'une religion à l'autre des influences que de dégager à la fois les affinités, quelle qu'en pût être l'explication, et les différences.

Son optique et sa méthode étaient fondamentalement celles de l'historien. „We must,” écrivait-il dans l'Introduction de *Man and his Destiny*, „eschew what may appear the more attractive way of following certain pre-selected themes through the relevant data of each religion and, instead, content ourselves with the more prosaic and sometimes tedious task of examining each religion separately to obtain the information which we seek”. Mais il ne concevait pas que l'on pût séparer l'histoire des religions de la phénoménologie religieuse. La *Comparative Religion* lui paraissait englober l'une et l'autre de ces disciplines complémentaires, parce qu'elle est “concerned with the history as well as the comparison of religious phenomena” (*Dictionary of Comparative Religion* s.v. *Phenomenology of Religion*).

Cependant l'on retrouve toujours chez lui, sous-jacent à la diversité des perspectives, un même fil conducteur : la conscience que l'homme prend du temps et de la fuite du temps, ainsi que du caractère inéluctable de la mort, est, pense-t-il, au cœur de l'expérience religieuse de l'humanité. Plus précisément, les religions, vues sous cet angle, peuvent apparaître comme une réaction de défense, destinée à neutraliser, par des voies diverses, l'effet dissolvant du temps : “From man's consciousness of Time there has stemmed a complex of imagery, of ritual practice, religious belief and philosophical speculation, which represents man's urgent and unceasing quest for security from Time's menace” (*History, Time and Deity*, p.V). Cette idée maîtresse, sans cesse reprise et développée sous des éclairages différents, fait l'unité fondamentale de l'œuvre de Brandon comme comparatiste et l'originalité de sa position parmi les historiens actuels des religions.

Brandon s'étonnait, dans la préface de *Man and his Destiny*, que le sujet de ce livre ait été très négligé jusqu'alors par la recherche historique. Il a sans doute pu constater, avec une satisfaction légitime, au

terme de sa trop brève carrière, que les points de vue développés dans ses ouvrages sont désormais, grâce à lui, universellement reconnus comme féconds et enrichissants. La valeur de son œuvre n'est certainement pas diminuée si l'on y perçoit, à travers les développements sereins de l'historien, l'angoisse de l'homme devant le mystère du temps. Il est assez émouvant d'apprendre que pour Brandon lui-même ce mystère devint "a vivid and provoking reality" lors d'une méditation, relatée dans la Préface de *Time and Mankind*, faite sur les ruines de l'antique Hippone, à l'ombre de Saint Augustin, face au port moderne de Bône, où des navires américains déchargeaient leur cargaison de tanks et d'avions. Aussi bien, si préoccupé fût-il de stricte objectivité, Brandon n'estimait pas y manquer en demandant au passé des leçons pour le présent et en cherchant, d'abord à travers la dure expérience de la guerre, puis dans l'étude des religions, mortes ou vivantes, un sens à l'histoire et à la vie.

Cependant, pour ce qu'on est convenu d'appeler le grand public, le nom de Brandon reste lié essentiellement à une interprétation particulière des origines chrétiennes. Déjà développée dans *The Fall of Jerusalem*, elle est reprise et précisée, une bonne quinzaine d'années plus tard, dans *Jesus and the Zealots* et dans *The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth*. Le premier de ces trois volumes représente, comme l'auteur le souligne lui-même, un certain retour aux positions de l'école de Tübingen dont les prétendus „fantômes”, dit-il, "are found to be very substantial beings" (*Fall of Jerusalem*, p.X). L'histoire des premières décennies du christianisme y est présentée essentiellement comme un conflit entre le judéo-christianisme de l'Eglise jérusalémite et l'interprétation paulinienne de l'Evangile. Celle-ci n'arriva à s'imposer, et encore imparfaitement, qu'après le drame de 70, prélude à une réhabilitation posthume de Paul. Mais déjà, sur cette vue générale des origines chrétiennes, qui représente une réaction saine contre d'excessives simplifications et des conceptions trop harmonisantes, se greffe la théorie reprise en détail dans les ouvrages suivants : le christianisme primitif, celui de Jésus et de ses premiers disciples, est un mouvement nationaliste, apparenté au mouvement zélote. C'est à juste titre, et non pas du fait d'une erreur sur le sens réel de son message, que Jésus fut exécuté par l'autorité romaine pour sédition. Et c'est parce que, solidaire du nationalisme juif, l'Eglise jérusalémite avait participé à la

révolte de 66-70 et subi avec les insurgés le désastre final que le judéo-christianisme disparut de la scène.

C'est ici la partie la plus fragile de l'œuvre de Brandon. Les critiques qu'elle a suscitées de toutes parts ne sont pas inspirées par l'unique souci de sauvegarder l'orthodoxie traditionnelle et l'image évangélique d'un Jésus non-violent. Elles ont été formulées aussi sur le plan de la stricte histoire, car la méthode même employée par Brandon en face des textes est ici en défaut. Il serait inélégant de ma part de leur faire écho dans ces lignes. Mais l'honnêteté intellectuelle et le respect que j'ai pour la mémoire de ce grand savant m'obligent à dire mon désaccord sur la thèse qu'il a soutenue. Lui-même, conscient du désarroi qu'elle jetterait dans certains esprits, profondément troublé aussi par l'utilisation que firent de ses conclusions certains groupes politiques radicaux de notre temps, enthousiasmés par ce „Jésus révolutionnaire”, estimait que les droits de la vérité historique devaient l'emporter sur toute autre considération. On peut n'être pas convaincu cette fois que la vérité est de son côté. Du moins nous a-t-il rendus attentifs à l'arrière-plan politique et social de la prédication de Jésus et à des interférences, plus occasionnelles sans doute et de moins de portée qu'il ne le pensait, mais néanmoins réelles, avec les Zélotes. C'est une gageure de vouloir réduire le christianisme naissant à une forme de nationalisme juif. Il est également difficile de le comprendre vraiment en l'isolant de son contexte. Le courant que l'on désigne communément sous l'appellation de zélote représentait pour Jésus et ses disciples une réalité toujours présente — et peut-être une tentation — par rapport à laquelle il leur fallait se définir, mais en prenant leurs distances bien plutôt qu'en constatant un accord fondamental entre les deux mouvements.

L'inlassable activité et l'exceptionnelle puissance de travail de Brandon ne se limitait pas aux seules tâches scientifiques et pédagogiques. Cet homme de devoir estimait ne pas pouvoir se confiner dans son cabinet de travail et dans les salles de cours. Il ne reculait pas devant les besognes ingrates de l'administration. Il assumait pendant plusieurs années les fonctions de Doyen de la Faculté de Théologie et de *Pro-Vice Chancellor* de son Université, avant d'accepter celles de Secrétaire Général de l'IAHR, cumulées en l'occurrence avec la responsabilité d'organiser à Manchester même, en 1975, le prochain Congrès International d'Histoire des Religions.

Son évolution spirituelle l'avait mené très loin de la stricte orthodoxie anglo-catholique de Mirfield. C'était, en religion, un libéral dans le sens le plus plein du terme. Comme tel, il se montra membre très actif de la *Modern Churchmen's Union*, dont il organisa et présida, en 1955, l'un des Congrès annuels, pour lequel il avait choisi un thème très caractéristique de ses propres préoccupations: „la vie et la mort”. Il collaborait régulièrement, par des articles et des comptes rendus, au *Modern Churchman*. Il lui restait cependant, de son éducation première selon les termes d'un de ses amis les plus proches, “a love of order both in his personal life and in what he himself regarded as a superstitious reverence for ordered ritual”. Mais, préoccupé par dessus tout de recherche historique objective, il refusait de la subordonner à un quelconque a-priori doctrinal. Il était très sensible au risque, apparu une fois ou l'autre, de voir les Congrès d'Histoire des Religions s'infléchir vers une sorte de *World Congress of Faiths*, en quête d'un commun dénominateur religieux. Ennemi de tout confusionnisme, il tenait à une rigoureuse séparation des domaines. Cet homme courtois et réservé savait à l'occasion se mettre en colère lorsque son idéal de *scholar* qui se voulait *unprejudiced* paraissait mis en question. J'entends encore le laconique commentaire par lequel il „exécuta”, lors d'un colloque scientifique, l'exposé de l'un des orateurs, qui reflétait de façon trop évidente des préoccupations apologétiques: “What is the purpose of this exercise?” demanda-t-il d'un ton à la fois méprisant et scandalisé.

Il assumait sa tâche de chercheur avec un profond sérieux, comme un véritable ministère. Il y apportait une ardeur contenue, une curiosité toujours en éveil, qui lui faisait chercher et découvrir sans cesse de nouvelles pistes à explorer. Il avait en projet de nombreuses publications. Les riches illustrations qui ornent les plus récents de ses ouvrages témoignent d'un intérêt croissant pour l'iconographie religieuse. Elles annoncent en quelque manière le livre qui paraîtra de façon posthume sous le titre *Man and God in Art and Ritual* et qui, en réaction contre une étude des religions trop strictement centrée sur leurs aspects doctrinaux et intellectuels, s'attache aux symboles, aux gestes et aux images où elles s'expriment et où la foi populaire s'allie à la théologie.

La carrière de Brandon avait peut-être atteint son apogée. Mais l'on pouvait encore attendre beaucoup de lui. Le Congrès qu'il devait

mettre sur pied à Manchester sera, organisé par d'autres que lui, un hommage à sa mémoire. L'histoire des religions a perdu en lui un de ses représentants les plus féconds et les plus distingués. Pour beaucoup d'entre nous, c'est un ami très cher qui s'en est allé.

MARCEL SIMON

RELIGIONSWISSENSCHAFT OR RELIGIOLOGY?

BY

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INTRODUCTION

The following essay presents a few reflections on the history of religions as a discipline in the light of certain critical questions that have been raised lately by some authors. Such questions are: What is history of religions? How is it related to theology? Has it outlived its usefulness? Has the time come to replace it with a "unified discourse" that is at the same time scientific, theological, philosophical, and pastoral? Since the latter attempts are sometimes called "religiology", the title of the present paper is "*Religionswissenschaft* or Religiology?"

In the year 1887, P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye began his *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte* by stating that "*Religionswissenschaft* is a new discipline which developed independently only in the last few decades, and is still partly in the process of becoming and has to fight for recognition of its rights" (21, p. 2). Similar statements have been made throughout the eighty-four years that have passed since then. Method, status, and academic study of *Religionswissenschaft* are still subjects of discussions by representatives of that discipline as well as by scholars in other fields, among them especially theologians (104; 107). On an international scale though, the picture seems to be varied and even contradictory. Thus, in 1968, W. G. Oxtoby, then of the Yale University, testified to the prospering of the field in American universities and colleges (69, p. 590). In 1971, C. Welch states that the recognition of the legitimacy of the academic study of religion is a well established fact (122, p. 6). From these and other voices it could be inferred that, despite all methodological discussions currently carried on, *Religionswissenschaft* is a firmly rooted and recognized academic discipline that is not any more in the stage of becoming than any other discipline. After all, every branch of learning is in a constant process of development, and especially now *wissenschaftstheoretische*

Fragen and metascientific questions are in the foreground of reflection (79); 133). But there are also voices that seem to testify to the contrary. "Ist die Religionswissenschaft am Ende?" is the title of a recent article by H. R. Schlette. In it he describes the situation in Germany: "The universities themselves and the state are — at least in this country — not especially interested in *Religionswissenschaft*; the proof for it is the number of chairs of this discipline in the faculties of *arts* (98, p. 196; 93, p. 62). In the same year, another German author, H.-W. Gensichen, discussed the "Fragwürdigkeit der Religionswissenschaft" as well as its disputed status in both faculties, the theological and philosophical (i.e. the faculty of arts) (33). This situation is, at least partly, due to the immense influence of Adolf von Harnack's speech "Die Aufgabe der theologischen Fakultäten und die allgemeine Religionsgeschichte" that was delivered on August 3, 1901, at the occasion of the commemoration of the founder of the University of Berlin, King Friedrich Wilhelm III (36; 23). In it he opposed Max Müller's famous thesis: "Wer eine Religion kennt, kennt keine" (67, p. 14), i.e. "He who knows one religion, knows none", with his equally famous antithesis: "Wer diese Religion nicht kennt, kennt keine, und wer sie samt ihrer Geschichte kennt, kennt alle" (36, p. 168), i.e. "He who does not know this religion knows none, and he who knows it together with its history knows all". By "this religion" Harnack meant of course Christianity, more specifically Catholic Christianity. Pinard de la Boullaye already pointed out the connection between Harnack's speech and the German universities' reluctance to erect chairs for the teaching of *Religionswissenschaft* (74, p. 352; 48; 49).

The situation is different in other European countries. L. Honko, e.g., pointed out that in Finland interest in the science of religion is growing rapidly despite the fact that it is a relatively new subject (43). The stand of "The History of Religions in Swedish Universities" has been described in a brochure of this title published at the occasion of the 12th International Congress for the History of Religions in Stockholm in 1970 (128).

Confidence with regard to the future development of *Religionswissenschaft* in Holland is expressed by B. A. van Proosdij (77).

As to France, it was H.-C. Puech who introduced the first volume of a projected three volume work on the history of religions in the well known collection *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade* with almost the same

words as Chantepie de la Saussaye began his *Lehrbuch* (78). He underlines not only the recent origin of history of religions as a discipline but also the slow process of its coming to itself, and its struggle for recognition of its right to exist as well as its efforts to obtain a more or less distinct place among the other disciplines. In similar terms A. Brelich, Rome, describes the present situation (19).

A recent article by P. O. Szolc describes the situation of *Religionswissenschaft* in Poland which is again different from that in Western Europe (116). History of religions was never an independent scientific discipline in Poland. There are no chairs for any of the fields of *Religionswissenschaft* except in theological schools. The latter do have chairs for *Religionsgeschichte* and philosophy of religion, but they cannot comply with international standards.

Thus, even if one were to take an optimistic stance with regard to the achievements of *Religionswissenschaft* in the last few years, there is the need for tempering and interpreting this claim, as it has been pointed out by C. Welch, for the situation in America and Canada (122, p. 4).

I. THE NATURE OF *Religionswissenschaft*

There is still a great deal of ignorance about the nature of *Religionswissenschaft* as an academic discipline, not only among the general public but also among the university population (56, pp. 191 f.; 75, p. 28). To improve this situation, in Turku (Finland), e.g., a science of religion symposium was held in 1970, organized by the Institute of Folklore and Comparative Religion in the University of Turku. The planners of it had two things in mind, informing the public about the main branches of the science of religion — history, phenomenology, sociology, psychology and anthropology of religions, and providing for the discussion of methodological matters on an international scale (43, p. 6). The fact that questions of methodology in *Religionswissenschaft* are presently one of the major concerns, has been mentioned already; it led the 12th Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions (abbr.: IAHR) in Stockholm to plan an international symposium on method for the year 1973, to be held in Turku.

The uncertainties with regard to the discipline under discussion begin already with terminological differences. A great many names are used to designate this kind of academic study. Among them are:

Religionswissenschaft, science of religion(s), history of religion(s), religious science(s), religious studies, religion, comparative (study of) religion(s), and religiology (70, p. 11).

a) *History of Religionswissenschaft*

As with every science, the best way to acquaint oneself with the *Problematik* of it, is to study its history and development. Unfortunately there is no recent History of *Religionswissenschaft* that is complete and satisfactory. The best such work, although dating from 1929, is still the first volume of Pinard de la Boullaye's *L'étude comparée des religions* with the subtitle *Son histoire dans le monde occidental*. The most recent overall treatment in English is Jan de Vries' *The Study of Religion: A Historical Approach* (118). As almost all accounts of the history of *Religionswissenschaft*, both these books start with the classical antiquity, including thus prescientific theories (61; 65). However, Chantepie de la Saussaye in the first edition of his *Lehrbuch* (21, pp. 2 f.) remarked already that such men as the Indian emperor Akbar or the Islamic philosopher Averroes cannot be regarded as precursors of religio-historical studies since their comparison of religions was too limited and their interest not scientific enough; only in the 2nd half of the 19th century the preconditions for the establishment of a real science of religion were given.

Today, it is generally agreed upon that *Religionswissenschaft* as a scientific discipline originated in the 19th century. It goes without saying that it is impossible to name a more precise date, even though it is Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900) who is usually called the "founder" of *Religionswissenschaft* (40, col. 990; 88, p. 22). The spiritual or ideological roots of it go back, though, to the Age of Enlightenment (89, p. 9; 88, p. 22; 65, p. 39; 55, pp. 16 f.). K. Rudolph in his excellent article "Die Problematik der Religionswissenschaft als akademisches Lehrfach" underlines the decisive importance of the two roots of *Religionswissenschaft*, the scholarly interest in non-Christian cultures, beginning with the discoveries, on the one hand, and the idea of religious tolerance on the other. It was and partly still is the fate, so to speak, of this discipline to vacillate between a religious-theological or philosophical and a philological-historical pole (88, p. 22). This is obvious in the works of the main representatives of *Religionswissenschaft* in the 19th and 20th centuries, such as F. M.

Müller, P. C. Tiele, N. Söderblom, R. Otto, G. van der Leeuw, F. Heiler, etc. There are, of course, exceptions, especially among philologist and anthropologists, e.g. E. B. Tylor, G. J. Frazer, H. Usener, W. Mannhart, E. Hardy, etc. These non-professional historians of religions were hardly or not at all influenced by theological doctrines, but they were dependent on contemporary anthropological theories. But, and this is what Rudolph wants to emphasize strongly, philological and historical research could eliminate such theories, whereas the influence of theological and metaphysical ideas was and is of an altogether different nature (88, p. 23). We shall return to this problem later.

b) *The Concept of Religion*

Since the object of *Religionswissenschaft* is religions, most treatises on methodological problems in this discipline begin with the question of "religion" (10, p. 5). Such a procedure is followed not only in introductory handbooks, such as W. Schmidt's *Ursprung und Werden der Religion: Theorien und Tatsachen* (100, pp. 3 f.), and, more recently, H. Ringgren's *Religionens form och funktion* (84, pp. 9-16), but also in A. Brelich's "Prolégomènes à une histoire des religions" and in R. D. Baird's article on "Interpretative Categories and the History of Religions" (8), to mention just some examples. According to Brelich, an initial definition of religion is necessary because the justification of an autonomous — or more precisely: relatively autonomous — scientific discipline lies in its specific object and methods that cannot be confounded with that of another discipline (19, p. 3). Baird demands that a functional definition must be given by a scholar at the beginning of his investigation rather than at the end since "religion" is or was a nebulous term (8, p. 21).

It is a truism that there exist a great many definitions of religion. Various disciplines with their proper perspective and approach have given their definitions — psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc. (130, p. 4). As to the historians of religion, the concept of religion is now described rather than defined in the strict sense of the latter term (19, p. 34; 4, p. 83). For what is in question is not an *a priori* definition of what religion ought to be (109, p. 8; 8, p. 29), but a concept derived from historical and systematical (comparative) research (88, p. 33; 19, p. 35; 10, p. 5). It is generally recognized that this is a difficult

problem for which no satisfactory solution has been found as yet. Perhaps one of the most useful procedures has been the one proposed by H. Ringgren (85, pp. XVII f.; 84, p. 12) who enumerates four essential elements of religion, an intellectual — the conviction of the existence of one or more powers controlling human destiny, an emotional — the feeling of dependence on this (these) power(s) and the experience of relationship with it (them), a behavioural — certain actions, e.g. sacrifice, prayer, and a social element — community and institution. In this context, Ringgren draws the attention to the description given by M. E. Spiro (114). The latter's definition together with that of C. Geertz (32) were also the starting point of the discussions of the Groninger Arbeitsgemeinschaft (4). The result was expressed in seven points that come close to Ringgren's description (4, pp. 84-86), although there are of course differences in details.

c) *What is Religionswissenschaft?*

The question now is "What is *Religionswissenschaft* or History of Religions?" Although this problem, too, found almost as many different answers as there are scholars that dealt with methodological issues, it seems possible to discern several basic features that are constitutive for the view of one or the other group of scholars.

The main elements of the traditional view could be described as follows. First of all, *Religionswissenschaft* is understood as being a historical-philological science and thus part of the *Geisteswissenschaften* (88, pp. 28f.; 87, p. 184; 10, p. 11). The term "philological" is to be taken in its broad sense, i.e. comprising linguistic, literary, archaeologic, sociological, *Kulturgeschichtliche*, etc., data (10, p. 11; 88, p. 29). History of religions is thus regarded as an empirical science. The means that any interpretation has to be based on and begin with empirical documentation. These principles were expressed already in 1898 by E. Hardy in his programmatic article "Was ist Religionswissenschaft?" in the first volume of the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* (35, pp. 11 and 19). To study the religious aspect of a culture presupposes, of course, the knowledge of all other aspects of this civilization or group. This principle, too, has been recognized at a very early stage in the work of *Religionswissenschaft* (89, pp. 84 f.). According to the traditional view, history of religions is not content with collecting, describing, and cataloguing data only. It endeavours

to study, i.e. describe, interpret, and understand (13, pp. 18 f.; 129) the religions throughout the history of mankind.

It would seem that the concept of the discipline under discussion as it has just been described in a few sentences, is mainly held by European students of *Religionswissenschaft* or by students educated by such European scholars (11; 3; 55; 104). There are, then, other views of what *Religionswissenschaft* is or ought to be.

H. Ringgren, among others, recently has drawn the attention to one group that adheres to methodological principles different from those described above, i.e. certain representatives of Eastern religions (83, pp. 124 f.). In articles (30) and at international congresses they expressed their concern about the fact that history of religions does not deal with questions of the truth and absolute value of religion. Such trends were discernible already in Tokyo in 1958, at the 9th International Congress for the history of religions (124), and even more so in 1960, in Marburg. The dangers inherent in them have been clearly pointed out by R. J. Z. Werblowsky (123; 18; 9; 106). He rejects also a distinction between an Eastern and a Western type of *Religionswissenschaft*. What is necessary, according to Werblowsky, is the awareness that there is a difference between the "approach to religion" and the "approach to the study of religions". At the end of the Congress in Marburg, Werblowsky submitted a paper in which he wanted to put down the basic minimum conditions for religio-historical studies. A number of outstanding scholars signed the paper in order to show that they were in essential agreement with the general substance of it (97; 106).

A third concept of *Religionswissenschaft* is represented by W. C. Smith who outlined it in his article "Comparative Religion: Whither — and Why?" (110), published in 1959, as well as in others of his writings. Among the latter it is especially his paper "Traditional Religions and Modern Cultures", presented at the 11th International Congress of the IAHR in Claremont, California, in 1965 (111). It is representative for the particular accent of this congress which is already expressed in two of the three themes formulated by the Program Committee for the papers and discussions of the Congress, viz.: "The Impact of Modern Culture on Traditional Religions" and "The Rôle of Historical Scholarship in Changing the Relations among Religions". U. Bianchi characterized it as an interest of a specifically

"intercultural" nature, strongly centered on the aspect of "mutual understanding", and as a specifically American "ecumenism" (12, pp. 529 f.). He does not deny the legitimacy of these interests as questions to be dealt with by the history of religions, but it has to be done according to the methods proper to this discipline, i.e. the historical-philological and comparative methods.

Ch. J. Adams (1) sees the situation in a somewhat different perspective. He deplores the fact that the studies of *Religionswissenschaft* have been of little or no use to the specialist of Islam. The fundamental reason for this lies, according to Adams, in the reluctance to recognize the "higher" religions and the recent past as well as the contemporary religious situation as suitable objects of research for the history of religions. To illustrate his point, he, too, refers to the Claremont Congress where, in his opinion, these "higher" religions and their contemporary evolution played a minor role although they are immediately relevant to us. He sees this attitude as characteristic of European scholars as opposed to North American, Asian, and English students (1, p. 186).

The International Congress in Stockholm, in 1970, was again organized in ten traditional sections representing the normal distribution according to the great historico-religious areas, as Bianchi stated (12, p. 529). This is not surprising when one thinks of the Scandinavian scholarship in the field, past as well as present, and looks at the list of scholars that formed the organizing committee, viz. G. Widengren, H. Ringgren, C.-M. Edsman, S. S. Hartman, Å. Hultkrantz, and H. Sundén. There were, though, various other problems that came to the fore which are relevant in the present context. One of them, already noted about the Congress in Marburg by Werblowsky (123, p. 218), and again pointed out by Widengren in his opening address in Stockholm, is the absence of many well known scholars that are specialists in various fields which are of vital importance to *Religionswissenschaft*, and who contribute greatly to this discipline, e.g., assyriologists, Old Testament scholars, classical philologists, social anthropologists, etc. They attend the meetings organized by their respective associations but do not want to be labelled "historians of religion". This fact was also recorded by Bourgault in his report on "Le congrès d'histoire des religions de Stockholm" (17, p. 115). But his interpretation of it and that of Werblowsky are not at all the same. Whereas the latter thinks

this absence of certain scholars is perhaps due, on the one hand, to the dilettantism, on the other to the theological nature of the contributions of many participants (123, p. 218), Bourgault is of a different opinion. The reason why history of religions is in a crisis and the specialists abandon it, is, according to Bourgault, the fact that *Religionsgeschichte* became first the successor of theology and then of philosophy of religion, and in this process it became less and less religious and more and more historical, then it was less and less interested in the history of the mind and more and more in philology, and finally it was divided into a multitude of philologies, archaeologies, and disparate and in-coordinable human sciences (17, p. 122).

Another problem of which the participants of the Stockholm Congress were aware and which is of interest to this paper, is one that has occupied the students of *Religionswissenschaft* for a long time now. It is the object and method of phenomenology of religion as well as its relationship to history of religions. We will discuss these problems below.

2. *Religionswissenschaft* AND THEOLOGY

Until recently it seemed that the question of the relationship between these two disciplines had been settled. But new trends in *Religionswissenschaft* make it necessary to re-examine the issue (31).

"Theology", in this paper, does not only denote Christian theology, but all the efforts and attitudes that are characterized by the same or at least similar qualities as the latter, no matter in what concrete historical form they are expressed. Theology, then, can be defined as the description and/or interpretation of and reflection on faith. The latter, in turn, is to be understood as the attitude of the religious man that manifests itself in various ways, and is the basis of all religious action and knowledge (92; 80). Since faith is received from a community (7, pp. 30-36; 6, pp. 214 f.), it is this religious community which theology serves by the results of its studies. Theology is therefore never a "pure" science (123, p. 220).

Religionswissenschaft is also understood in a universal sense. This means that it is regarded as being the same all over the world although it is a product of the Occident and originated in the milieu of Christianity. There is no doubt that this origin marked history of religions (42, p. 209; 9, p. 73). Bourgault goes even so far as to say that

Religionswissenschaft cannot be international as is, e.g., physics, but is rather a function of the local history and existential situations (17, p. 116). Werblowsky admits only one distinction, i.e., the interest in history of religions is different in different countries. But, so he emphasizes, *Religionswissenschaft* is the same wherever it is pursued (123, p. 219).

Now, as to the relationship between history of religions and theology several trends can be noted. H.-W. Gensichen has recently summarized the present stand of the question (33, pp. 33-39). He sees two solutions, a "lesser" and a "greater" one. The former consists of the positive co-existence of *Religionswissenschaft* and theology which presupposes a) that certain historians of religion drop their crypto-theological claims and b) that theology accepts the method of a historical-empirical and phenomenological *Religionswissenschaft* for the sake of dialogue with the religions. This is the method usually followed today.

The second solution belongs, according to Gensichen, rather to the realm of theological utopia. It is the "greater" solution that aims at a kind of integration of *Religionswissenschaft* and theology. Two considerations lead to this approach. First, one wants to find a higher unity in the history of religions, not just isolated phenomena. Second, one is not satisfied with a study of only human religious behaviour, but wants also to concern oneself with that reality which is the aim of this behaviour. In other words, one has recourse to a new theology of history from which answers are deduced that once were given through pseudo or crypto-theological interpretations of religion. As the foremost representative of this approach Gensichen names W. Pannenberg. The latter proposes a theology of the history of religions whose validity depends wholly on its specifically Christian-dogmatic presuppositions. Gensichen rejects such a solution and insists, at least for the time being, on the positive co-existence as the only possible and most fruitful relationship between theology and history of religions.

This last mentioned view has been strongly advocated by a great number of historians of religion and is also considered as most desirable by many theologians. As to the historians of religion it would seem that again European scholars in particular are the ones that speak in favour of a clear distinction between the two disciplines. Gensichen mentions as one example W. Baetke. In recent years it is especially K. Rudolph, a former student of Baetke, who advocates

strongly the freedom of *Religionswissenschaft* from any theological presuppositions (89; 88). On principle, theological studies in the strict sense are different from empirical-historical studies since the former are based on religious faith and make therefore *Glaubensaussagen* that are of a different nature than the results of investigations which do not presuppose such a religious faith (88, p. 38). This is not to deny that the historian of religions needs also a certain pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*) (88, p. 38) of his object. That there is no such thing as a presuppositionless science is also known to him (22, pp. 99-103; 105, p. 198), although the awareness of given presuppositions is much more pronounced now than it was in the past (17, p. 118; 13, pp. 9 f.).

H. Ringgren emphasizes that history of religious as an empirical science does not pass judgments on the value and truth of religions (84, p. 19). According to such a concept, it is, e.g., not the task nor the possibility of the historian of religions, nor of the historian of the Church for that matter (105, p. 201), to prove that the doctrines of the existence of God, Incarnation, and Trinity are wrong, nor to show that they are true. Or, in the words of M. Smith, "Whether or not supernatural beings exist is a question for metaphysics" (109, p. 12). The same idea is expressed by G. van der Leeuw in the opening paragraph of his book *Phänomenologie der Religion* (60, p. 3).

Equally as strong is Th. van Baaren's and C. J. Bleeker's insistence on the strictly empirical character of *Religionswissenschaft* in their responses to an article by K. A. H. Hidding entitled "Het verschijnsel godsdienst: Prolegomena voor de godsdienstfenomenologie" (38). History of religions, also in its form of phenomenology, studies religion as a cultural phenomenon, without making metaphysical or *weltanschauliche* statements (5, p. 336). Bleeker distinguishes between "religious phenomenology" and "phenomenology of religion", whereby the latter takes its material from the strictly factual investigations of history of religions (in the narrow sense) (14, pp. 337 f.).

A clear division of labour between a theological study of religion on the one hand and history of religions on the other is also considered necessary for the sake of both kinds of research by J. M. Kitagawa (54, p. 64).

By making all these distinctions and reservations, the authors concerned do not intend to propose any form of agnosticism, philosophical positivism, skepticism, or relativism; a fact that has been emphasized

by many scholars (125, p. 34; 12, p. 529). It is recognized, though, that history of religions and its findings have been used to support one or several of the said philosophical or theological positions, the obvious example being the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* (105, p. 195). This is also the reason why not only the history of *Religionswissenschaft* is marked by its attempt to separate itself from theology (89; 42), but that theology too struggled for liberation from history of religions (42, p. 197).

Another reason why history of religions can come into conflict with a religion, can be the fact that the description of the history of a religious tradition does not coincide with the actual selfunderstanding of this tradition. Thus it can come to a clash between the results of historical scholarship and the image that a religion has at a given time about itself. In such a case, history of religions can act as a corrective, so to speak, of theology. But should *Religionswissenschaft* play such a function, it would not be intentional.

Finally, those authors who want clear borderlines between the two fields of study under discussion, do realize that both are related to each other and interdependent, and can therefore not only learn (58; 59; 42; 88) from, but also need each other (16; 103).

However, there are, then, those who aim, explicitly or implicitly, at an integration of theology and history of religions. Apart from Panenberg mentioned above, R. Bourgault seems to tend in the same direction when he says that the object of the history of religions is God (17, p. 120).

To summarize, one can say with Gensichen, that today the "lesser" solution of a positive co-existence prevails. Attempts at an integration have so far, at least in a methodologically explicit way, not many representatives.

3. TERMINOLOGY

As has been said above, uncertainties with regard to the discipline that in this paper is called *Religionswissenschaft* and history of religions, express themselves in the great variety of names that are used to refer to more or less the same area of studies.

a) *Religionswissenschaft*

The German term *Religionswissenschaft* is now usually understood

as an umbrella term for a group of disciplines that study the religions, past and present, on an empirical basis as distinct from theology and philosophy of religion. In short, "the term is used to designate the integral non-normative study of religious realities" (34, p. 250).

b) *Science(s) of Religion(s)*

The English translation of *Religionswissenschaft* "science(s) of religion(s)" as well as the French "*science des religions*" have been used for a long time (74, p. 548), but are not generally accepted since the German term *Wissenschaft* has since Leibniz a much wider meaning than the English or French "science" (46, p. 49). It designates every kind of disciplined research (82, p. 275) and not only natural science. Traditionally, *Wissenschaft*, then, is divided into *Geisteswissenschaften* and *Naturwissenschaften*. Humanistic studies are therefore regarded as sciences without their being modelled on the natural sciences (82; 79). However, to avoid the connotations of the English term science and the misunderstandings that may arise from it, some writers prefer to use other expressions for the same discipline.

c) *Comparative (Study of) Religion(s)*

One of the terms used as a synonym of *Religionswissenschaft* is "comparative religion" which is an abbreviation for "comparative study of religion(s)" (126, p. 278; 89; 132, p. 11; 47, pp. 7-28; 45, p. 75). But it too is discarded by many because of the use of the term in certain comparatistic theories of the past (34, p. 250) and preference is often given to the designation "history of religions" in the modern understanding of this term as adopted by the International Association for the History of Religions.

d) *History of Religions*

The expression "history of religions" had already been used by the 1st International Congress in Paris, in 1900, in order to state explicitly its purely scientific aims and its intention to exclude from its studies the philosophy of religion; history was understood though in the largest possible sense (74, p. 356).

In the modern usage of "history of religions", the term history designates something more than purely historiographical studies, viz.

the integral non-normative study of religious realities referred to above.

e) *Religion*

Sometimes the term religion is used in the sense of *Religionswissenschaft* or a similar activity. Such a procedure is followed by C. A. Holbrook in his book *Religion: A Humanistic Field* (39), although he knows that misunderstanding arises easily since the term can mean the activity as well as the study of it, as it is also the case with the term art. R. A. McDermott takes this ambiguity to be much more confusing than the instances of "art" and "history", and suggests therefore to introduce the word "religiology" (64, p. 12).

There are other reasons also why it seems to many of little use to employ the name religion for the field of study under discussion, one of them being the usage of "religion" for designating "religious instruction" in one's own faith.

f) *Religious Studies*

Just as "religion", the name "religious studies" is subject to criticism because of its ambiguity. Judged by the programs offered under this title, it has such a wide variety of meanings that it becomes useless as a designation of a discipline. As McDermott points out, it seems rather to be a symptom of "the mixture of catechetics and confusion still characteristic of most religion courses presently being offered at the college level" (64, p. 12).

g) *Religiology*

So far, there seem to be three more or less programmatic statements concerning the use of "religiology" or its French translation. All three claim it to be the equivalent of the German *Religionswissenschaft*: R. A. McDermott in his article "Religion as an Academic Discipline", H. Kishimoto in his article "Religiology" (53) which constitutes the first chapter of an unpublished translation of his Japanese book on the subject, and R. Bourgault in *Religiologiques*, an anthology published by himself and L. Rousseau (81), as well as in his article "Le congrès".

McDermott's reason for choosing this term has already been mentioned. Using Wittgensteinian language, he defines religiology as "a

disciplined attempt to describe and analyze — with the help of other disciplines — all of the games which may be counted as having a religious meaning” (64, p. 17). Explicitly referring to Wach, Eliade and Kitagawa, McDermott follows essentially the history-of-religions approach in the sense of historical and systematic research of religions. Religiology in his case denotes therefore the same as *Religionswissenschaft* and history of religions.

It is somewhat different with Kishimoto's use of the expression “religiology”. He seems to restrict the meaning of it to the systematic part of the research subsumed under *Religionswissenschaft*, although he does not apply his own terminology in a wholly consistent way. According to him, the historical study of religion investigates its objects as unique phenomena, whereas religiology studies them as manifestations of typical phenomena (53, pp. 84 f.). Both these branches of the scientific study of religion are empirical and value-neutral studies that do not concern themselves with the solution of metaphysical questions (53, p. 82). “Religiology” means therefore for Kishimoto the systematic or thematic part of *Religionswissenschaft*.

Altogether different is Bourgault's notion of religiology. He too claims *religiologie* to be the French equivalent of the German *Religionswissenschaft* and the English religiology (81, p. 11). Although this may be semantically correct, Bourgault's further explanations reveal little similarity between his concept of *religiologie* and what is commonly called *Religionswissenschaft*. In spite of his strong emphasis on the difference between *religiologie* on the one hand, and theology and anthropology on the other, G. Leroux has shown that he could not avoid an identification of religiology and metaphysics (81, p. 37).

Bourgault's most recent attempt to renew history of religions and present a definition of religiology is found in his article “Le congrès d'histoire des religions de Stockholm”. He describes it as a discipline, a “habitus intellectivo-volontaire” that respects the various kinds of religious studies: mythology, theology, philosophy of religion, history of religions, phenomenology, philology, archaeology, psychology, sociology or anthropology; attempts to uncover, criticize, and integrate the data, and use the results for the solution of the spiritual problems of a given milieu (17, pp. 122 f.). Bourgault claims that such a science cannot be said to be above or below theology, neither within nor outside of it, but that it may be of a religious and theological (*théologique*)

nature itself. These statements together with the one mentioned above, i.e., that God is the object of the science of religion, clearly show that *Religionswissenschaft* in the traditional sense and Bourgault's *religologie* are two distinct fields. A fact that does not contribute to the clarification or unification of terminology that is needed.

4. DIVISIONS OF *Religionswissenschaft*

There were already several occasions in the course of this paper, where within *Religionswissenschaft* a historical and a systematic part had been distinguished. Despite differences in terminology, it is generally agreed upon that these are the two main branches (119, pp. 72 and 107; 88, p. 29; 55, p. 19; 84, p. 20; 104, p. 2), i.e., history of religions in the narrow sense and systematic *Religionswissenschaft*.

a) *History of Religions in the Narrow Sense*

History of religions in the narrow sense has as its aim to study the historical development of specific religions by the method of a horizontal cross section, as it were, or *längsschnittmäßig*, as Wach (119) called it. The methods it uses are the usual historical methods and their auxiliary disciplines. The history of specific religions includes all the elements and aspects of a religious tradition as well as the "secular" factors that are interrelated with the former. U. Bianchi speaks therefore of "religious worlds" (10, p. 8). It goes without saying that this "history" includes past as well as present developments.

By some authors, history of religions in the narrow sense or, in German, *Religionsgeschichte* is further subdivided into a so-called general history of religion and the histories of specific religions (55, p. 19). The former can be understood in different ways (119, pp. 72-77). It can mean the attempt to study all the religions that exist and have existed. This, of course, can only be the task of history of religions as a discipline, not of an individual scholar. There is then another meaning which this expression can have to some writer, i.e. the history of the development of *the* religion in general (57, p. 14). J. Wach (119, pp. 76 f.) and again K. Rudolph have pointed out that such a construct cannot be the task of the empirical history of religions. Rudolph emphasizes that the concept of *the* religion is a metaphysical or theological abstract, dating from the age of rationalism, German

idealism, and romanticism; historically speaking, *the* religion does not exist (88, pp. 30 and 32).

When Bleeker speaks of a "general history of religions" (plural) he means by it again something different. According to him, general history of religions deals with the results of the contacts between various religious traditions, and prepares by its work also the solution of general problems (15, p. 10). It would seem though that all these tasks fall within the scope of either history of religions in the narrow sense or systematic *Religionswissenschaft*.

On the whole, the use of the term "general history of religion(s)" is today not widespread.

b) *Systematic Religionswissenschaft*

The second branch of history of religions in the broad sense of the term is the systematic study of religious phenomena, aiming at a vertical cross-section or a *Querschnitt*, to use again Wach's expression (119, p. 177). By using the term systematic, the authors do not mean that they intend to construct a philosophical or theological speculative system, as Wach (119, pp. 172 f.) has pointed out, nor is it to be understood as a "normative" or "practical" science (102, pp. 152-155). Rather, what is meant is a comparative study based on the findings of historical research. A less misleading name may be "thematic" study of religions since this is what is usually done under the name "systematic" study of religion. However, the latter term has been in general use for such a long time that it does not seem feasible to replace it.

The method of the systematic *Religionswissenschaft* is thus that of comparison as it is used by all *Geisteswissenschaften* (86). This branch of *Religionswissenschaft* is therefore called "comparative (study of) religion(s)", in German *Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft* or *Vergleichende Religionsgeschichte*. Preference is sometimes given to the last term (88, p. 29), since it indicates the historical basis of the study.

Although older concepts of the function of comparison in the study of religions (47, pp. XI and 63) have been overcome, and the dangers inherent in a simplistic kind of comparison have also been pointed out many times (25, p. 664; 70, pp. 14 f.; 127, p. 259; 62), the methods of this discipline are in need of a rethinking. Several scholars have pointed to this, among them Th. van Baaren in his article "Systematische Religionswissenschaft" (4), and C. J. Bleeker at the Congress

in Stockholm. Most recently, J. Z. Smith has analyzed the use of comparison with regard to cultural and religious data (108). He too calls for new ways of comparison in history of religions.

With regard to the terminology, *Religionswissenschaft* in the narrow sense is often employed for systematic *Religionswissenschaft* (40; 41) as opposed to history of religions in the narrow sense. However, it is emphasized that both disciplines are interconnected (40; 41). It seems though preferable to use the following terminology: *Religionswissenschaft* or history of religions in the broad sense as an umbrella term (*Oberbegriff*) for the discipline whose two branches are history of religions in the narrow sense and comparative or systematic study (or science) of religions (24, p. 261).

Now, for a number of scholars the second branch is synonymous with phenomenology of religion. K. Rudolph, e.g., declares that for him phenomenology of religion is identical with the comparative study of religions (88, p. 30). Similarly van Baaren, who finds the term phenomenology of religion less appropriate (5, p. 336), prefers to call this science systematic *Religionswissenschaft* (4, p. 81).

Concept and methods of phenomenology of religion are much debated subjects (45; 90; 24). According to H. H. Penner, phenomenology of religion does not exist at all (71; 72). In any event, because of the interrelationship of history and phenomenology of religion (10, p. 15; 73), methodological discussions in either field are necessarily concerned with *Religionswissenschaft* as a whole.

A systematic science of religion in the sense of *Vergleichende Religionswissenschaft* is not accepted by the Section des Sciences religieuses of the École pratique des Hautes Études in Paris as can be seen from their publication *Problèmes et méthodes d'histoire des religions* (76), issued at the occasion of the centenary of the École pratique. The representatives of the Section concentrate on monographs, although there is Claude Lévi-Strauss' chair, entitled "Religions comparées des peuples sans écriture", that of G. Dumézil, entitled "Étude comparée des religions des peuples indo-européens", and that of André Caquot, entitled "Religions sémitiques comparées". The editors of the volume point out that most of their colleagues are on their guard against any kind of rush synthesis (76, p. XII). Some of the contributors do not think that a history or a science of religions as an autonomous discipline exists as yet since there is no common vocab-

ulary, *Problematik*, and methodology. The elaboration of it is, according to these scholars, a task of the future, to which the Section hopes to contribute.

5. AUXILIARY DISCIPLINES OF *Religionswissenschaft*

There are several disciplines whose position in relation to history of religions seems to be somewhat ambiguous. These are the traditional sub-disciplines, or sometimes they are also called branches, into which *Religionswissenschaft* is divided, i.e., history of religions in the narrow sense, phenomenology of religion, sociology of religion, psychology of religion, ethnology or anthropology of religion, and geography of religion. For several reasons it seems to be preferable though to distinguish only the two sub-disciplines or branches that were discussed in the preceding section, i.e. history of religions in the narrow sense and systematic science of religion, in relation to which the other sciences, or rather methods, enumerated above have only auxiliary functions (10, pp. 13 and 15; 58, pp. 23 f.).

All these auxiliary disciplines can be said to have the same characteristics which D. Savramis outlines with regard to sociology of religion (95, p. 108). They are "synthetic" sciences, i.e., they result from a synthesis or combination of several sciences. In the case of sociology of religion, the main disciplines that form this synthesis are sociology and *Religionswissenschaft*. It is therefore understandable that the question arose whether sociology of religion and the other auxiliary disciplines form part of the particular "secular" sciences, i.e. sociology, psychology, etc., or of *Religionswissenschaft*. Both views have been vindicated. Savramis, e.g., declares sociology of religion as a special branch of the social sciences, subject to their laws. On the other hand, there are those who favour the integration of these disciplines into *Religionswissenschaft*, as, for instance, W. Keilbach does in his article "Die empirische Religionspsychologie als Zweig der Religionswissenschaft" (51). Whereas D. H. Salman advocates the opposite in his article "Die Religionspsychologie als Zweig der wissenschaftlichen Psychologie" (94). In his response to the latter, Keilbach admitted that the one as well as the other view is justified (52, p. 49). But, so he continues, there might be a different aspect, depending on whether one wants above all to elucidate the *factum religiosum* and uses to

this end also psychology, or one aims first of all at a knowledge of the human soul and investigates it also with regard to its religious experiences. Thus, on principle, psychology of religion can be regarded as a branch of either psychology or *Religionswissenschaft*. What is important, however, is competency in either field. Keilbach is doubtful whether a psychologist will have sufficient knowledge in religious matters, whereas the latter could be rightly assumed for someone who comes from history of religions or theology. Savramis makes the opposite point. A theologian who happens to be interested in psychology does not make a psychologist of religion. The presupposition is training in both areas.

The necessity of being competent in either area, sociology and religion in this case, is also underlined by Th. F. O'Dea (37, p. 23). But he also points out that it does make a difference whether studies in sociology of religion are pursued within the framework of a department of religion or of sociology. Not only do the techniques and methodologies of sociology, and by analogy we may add of psychology, etc., undergo a broadening and a transformation, but the sociologist too, since he is compelled to become aware of the content of religion to a much greater extent than if he would be working in an ordinary department of sociology.

No matter under which category of sciences these various auxiliary disciplines of *Religionswissenschaft* are subsumed, one thing is generally agreed upon, i.e. the empirical and scholarly character of the study undertaken by them. Theological or philosophical sociologies of religion, e.g., are strictly rejected (50, p. 10). The same applies to psychology of religion. Theological statements that make use of psychological terminology cannot be called psychology of religion.

Another requirement for the disciplines under discussion is that of including in their research more than just one particular religious tradition (50, p. 11). Again, this does not mean that every individual scholar or every single work in these fields has to draw on all or even on many religions. The requirement refers to the work done by the discipline as a whole. The basic orientation has to be such that the comparative character of the studies is preserved. Both sociology of religion and psychology of religion are therefore intimately linked with *Religionswissenschaft* and cannot dispense with the results of the history of religions. On the other hand, neither can history of

religions work without these disciplines. However, whereas sociology of religion is well advanced today, Keilbach's statement that psychology of religion did not yet get beyond the beginnings (52, p. 51), expresses still the situation of this discipline (23, p. 64; 24, p. 263).

As to the discipline ethnology or anthropology of religion, the close connection between it and history of religions is a well known fact. Similarly, the relationship between anthropology of religion and sociology of religion is also very close; according to Yinger, in principle the two disciplines are virtually identical, although they differ to a certain extent in method and data (131, p. 117). It is its limitation to religions of non-literate peoples, that distinguishes primarily anthropology of religion from sociology of religion (50, p. 12; 101, p. 1). On the whole though there is "only a thin line of distinction" (131, pp. 117 f.) which in an advanced science of religion must, according to Yinger, be lost.

The last discipline to be mentioned, geography of religion, exists only in very small beginnings. Apart from two books (26; 113), there are only short articles and treatises. An integration of our knowledge about the spatial aspect of religion still awaits realization (115).

It goes without saying that the term auxiliary disciplines is not intended to imply that *Religionswissenschaft* is regarded as the queen of all sciences that deal with religion, including theology. It expresses only the necessity for history of religions to make use of all available resources that help to gain a better insight in and understanding of religions and, in the last analysis, of man. It is thus also obvious that history of religions draws not only on sociology, psychology, anthropology, and geography, but many other sciences, such as linguistics, archaeology, art, folklore, etc.

6. PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

It is the declared intention of the religio-historical studies of religions, not to develop a philosophy of religion. To indicate this, the first International Congress of the History of Religions in 1900, deliberately used the term history. And the statement concerning "the basic minimum conditions for the study of the history of religions" quoted above excludes not only theological, but also philosophical questions (*Fragestellungen*) as objects of the study of this discipline. Methods and aims of theology as well as of philosophy of religion are

different from those of the historical-empirical history of religions. This holds true, even though Wach's characterization of philosophy as a normative discipline (120, pp. 1 f.; 119) cannot be accepted in this way any more (88, pp. 29 and 32). As there are today many different conceptions of philosophy, there are also many different notions of what philosophy of religion is. It is impossible to give a generally accepted and precise definition of the field (112). Philosophies of religion are, nonetheless, considered to be fundamentally different from the studies carried out by history of religions (92, p. 291; 130, pp. 82 f.).

But this distinction on principle does not mean that history of religions ignores philosophy. It goes without saying that *Religionswissenschaft* cannot dispense with the philosophical clarification of its fundamental conceptions and a thorough analysis of its presuppositions and notions. Linguistic analysis, philosophical hermeneutics, etc. have an important role to play in all methodological reflections within history of religions.

H. R. Schlette is of the opinion *Religionswissenschaft* is not interested in a philosophical discussion of fundamental methodological problems because of its strong animosity against philosophy in general and philosophy of religion in particular (99, p. 6). He tries to illustrate the problem of the relationship between history of religions and philosophy of religion through the formula that religion is the encounter with the sacred which, according to Schlette, is considered by *Religionswissenschaft* as expressing the nature or essence of religion. He then criticizes Fr. Heiler and his understanding of religion and *Religionswissenschaft*, as he did already in his book *Towards a Theology of Religions*. Although there is a grain of truth in what Schlette says, a greater familiarity with *Religionswissenschaft* as a whole would show that he sees the situation at least somewhat onesidedly.

7. QUESTS FOR RENEWAL AND NEW TRENDS

It has been repeatedly urged that *Religionswissenschaft* find new ways and methods, and incorporate the results of the advancement in related fields of scientific research. Three voices may be mentioned in this context as representative of many similar concerns.

In Germany, it was K. Rudolph who pleaded not only for a clear

delineation of the tasks, possibilities and limitations of a historically oriented study of religious man in the past and present, but pointed also to the necessity of incorporating, e.g., the findings of linguistic analysis as well as philosophical and historical hermeneutics in order to arrive at a more accurate terminology and to avoid or eliminate *Scheinprobleme*, and thus to gain better insights into the religious man of the past and present (87, p. 183; 88; 92).

In Holland, Th. P. van Baaren with the "Groninger Arbeitsgemeinschaft zum Studium der Grundfragen und Methoden der Religionswissenschaft" set about a rethinking of the fundamental problems of the discipline (4).

In North-America, it is especially W. C. Smith who predicts the emergence of a new type of religious scholarship, especially in North-America, but in order to succeed it will need international support and co-operation (111, p. 71).

Needless to say that the "new study" envisaged by various scholars differs according to their particular methodological stands and scholarly as well as existential concerns. But they all agree that its achievements and methods are only in the state of beginning. According to van Baaren a renewal of systematic *Religionswissenschaft* must to a large extent be done by a team of scholars. In his opinion the two questions that have to be answered first and foremost are: What is religion? and What is the method of the systematic *Religionswissenschaft*?

A distinction is to be made though between a renewal of *Religionswissenschaft* on the one hand, and attempts to transform history of religions into a different discipline on the other. Whereas K. Rudolph and van Baaren intend the former, scholars like W. C. Smith or R. Borgault seem to be more interested in the latter.

8. CRITICAL REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS

In the following, some problems will be pointed out that present themselves to the historian of religions that reflects on methodological questions. It goes without saying that it lies beyond the scope of a single paper to try to treat all these issues. Rather, it can only be attempted to draw attention to some of the questions that await solutions if *Religionswissenschaft* is to progress in any way.

a) *On the Nature and Aims of Religionswissenschaft*

Today the traditional self-understanding of history of religions is questioned. It is said, that first of all the ideal of an objective study is illusory, and secondly that purely historical scholarship is sterile, does not contribute to the solution of contemporary problems, and is therefore useless and outdated. The concept of a "detached" scholarship is neither possible to attain nor desirable. What is needed, the argument runs, is a study of the faith of contemporary man so that he can be given assistance in solving his problems.

First of all, it should be emphasized once more that the concepts of objectivity and detachment or *epoché*, i.e. the suspension of the judgment on the question of the truth of religion, are not meant in a fundamentalist or absolute sense. There may have been times when historians together with other scholars believed in a kind of purely objective research. But the development also in the history of religions has long since overcome such notions, as has been pointed out above. It is recognized by historians of religion that, for epistemological as well as psychological reasons, absolute objectivity does not exist, nor absolutely presuppositionless science (83). Already J. Wach spoke explicitly of "relative" objectivity (121, p. 57). When the term "objective study" continues to be used by many authors, it is done with the awareness that a) no individual is capable of completely suspending all his judgments, presuppositions, and biases, and b) modern philosophy has shown that there is no such thing as "observing objectively". Every act of observation involves interpretation on the part of the observer. Knowledge of history is, in its turn, also historically conditioned. The historian cannot overcome his own historicity. One may refer here to the German distinction between *Historie* and *Geschichte*. The first term means the mere registering of *bruta facta*. Such mere facts do, of course, exist. But this is not *Geschichte*, history in the proper sense of the word since these *facta* are never available independently from the situation of the reflecting person. The unity of "history as such", so to speak, or of *Historie*, and reflection is what is called *Geschichte* or history. The meaning of the ascent on the mount Olympus, e.g., cannot be determined "objectively". Whether it is an expression of hybris or merely sport, can only be decided in a particular context of motivations (27, p. 221; 20, pp. 120-123; 96, p. 16). All this holds

true also for history of religions. With the advancement of philosophy and *Wissenschaftstheorie*, history of religions must also refine its epistemology.

The fact remains though that there is a basic difference between a theological evaluation of religions (117; 68) on the one hand, and the attempt to understand specific religious traditions in their own right, on the other. Only the latter can be the task of history of religions. To elaborate a *theologia religionis* or *religionum* is not its concern (13, p. 24).

The emphasis on the difference between theological and historical concerns about religions is necessary today, because of certain attempts at a "renewal" of *Religionswissenschaft* that have been mentioned already in the foregoing. In particular it is R. Bourgault who proposes to solve the crisis of history of religions by making it practically a theological discipline that aims at solving man's spiritual problems. This becomes clear from his definition of *religiologie*. What Bourgault envisages would be called in traditional terminology "pastoral theology" of a new type. This is of course a legitimate and necessary undertaking. But it should not be maintained that it is *Religionswissenschaft*. The latter term was used for several decades to designate precisely that kind of studying religions that is not based on theological premises and has as its aim not the direct solutions of the spiritual problems of a given milieu. What Bourgault is proposing is, therefore, not a renewal of history of religions but of pastoral theology. For the sake of terminological clarity the name *Religionswissenschaft* should not be used in this context. One may create a neologism or use "religiology" without maintaining that it is the equivalent of *Religionswissenschaft*.

Bourgault is right in saying that the development of *Religionswissenschaft* is only possible when a certain distance to one's own traditional religion has been attained (17, p. 116). This fact has been pointed out repeatedly (65, p. 17; 42, p. 191). To those persons or societies that have not the ability to relativize, at least methodologically, their own position and to gain that distance from themselves, so to speak, a study of religion other than a theological one is not acceptable. Such a lack of self-distance exists not only among Eastern representatives of religious studies (123, p. 218) but also among Western writers. But to equate, as Bourgault does, the rise and development of the historical and empirical investigation of religion on the one

hand, and the fact that religion is in the process of ceasing to be lived by the majority on the other, is adopting a particular view of "religion" and interpreting the data in too simple a way. It seems that Bourgaault's aspirations have to be understood in the American context, where history of religions, according to Bourgaault, tried to become a substitute of theology. It is thus characterized, in the words of Sharpe, by "the emphasis on experience, the synthetic ideal, and the subsidiary motive of utilitarianism" (104, pp. 10 f.). It should be repeated once more that it is fully legitimate to develop a discipline that is directed toward practical ends, i.e., the analysis of modern man's situation in order to find means to better it. To promote mutual understanding, ecumennism, religious maturity, etc. are all laudable purposes, and certainly need realization. But as in the case of any other science too, a society has to decide whether it wishes to study *Religionswissenschaft* in the commonly accepted sense or it does not. Although it is possible to enumerate reasons why the study of history of religions is advantageous and profitable, in the last analysis "the desirability of science... is a value stand itself and cannot be defended on scientific grounds" (131, p. 136). History of religious is one way of studying religions, theology another, psychology of religion a third way, and so on — all these different kinds of religious studies complement each other and contribute to a fuller knowledge of what religion means to man.

The aim of *Religionswissenschaft* is only the advancement of knowledge. Its application lies outside the domain of the discipline as such (123, p. 220; 125). On the one hand, history of religions has this quality in common with other sciences, on the other it distinguishes it from theology that serves a particular group of believers. This delineation of the aim of history of religions does, of course, not exclude the actual application of its insights and results by persons interested in it, nor does it prevent a teacher of *Religionswissenschaft* from reflecting, with his students, on the existentially relevant aspects of his studies. Apart from that, the indirect bearing and influence that the study and results of history of religions have on vital contemporary issues are not less important and effective because they are indirect. First of all there is the influence on the student's own outlook. There is no one who pursues comparative studies of religion without changing, in one way or another, his personal religious outlook. But there are also the consequences of the scholarship that is seemingly

far removed from the concerns of contemporary man. This point is very well illustrated by Ch. J. Adams in his article "The History of Religions and the Study of Islām". It was Goldziher's work that had the most far reaching consequences for modern Islam. And this in spite of three factors that would seem to preclude any "practical" implications, i.e. a) Goldziher was a purely philological and historical scholar with only scientific objectives, b) he concentrated on the past, and c) he did not will, and perhaps was not even aware of the possible consequences of his studies (1, pp. 192 f.). As all historical scholarship, history of religions deepens and widens our knowledge about possible forms of life through the mediation of traditions (79, vol. 2, p. 22).

The advancement of knowledge in the field of history of religions consists not only in accumulating all available data on religious matters throughout the history of mankind, but also in the attempt to understand the meaning of these data. For this reason it might be better to describe the character of the discipline as "descriptive-understanding" study rather than empirical. The latter could evoke strong associations with the natural sciences. However, the use of the word empirical has become general in the literature on *Religionswissenschaft*.

As to the accumulating of data, it is often said that there is no lack of them any more since former generations of scholars did only that, i.e. collecting and cataloguing facts. This period is closed, now the task is a completely different one. It is true that a vast amount of data has been collected and that mere cataloguing and registering is not what is needed. But it is also true that gathering of data will never be finished. And this not only because there are still aspects and facts that are unknown to us and await clarification and because new finds are made every day in all parts of the world that can alter our traditional understanding of a supposedly well known tradition completely. But there is also the fact that the methods of investigation are refined constantly and become more sophisticated as the various sciences progress. One has to think only of anthropology and its methods. But there is still another reason why so-called factual accounts of particular religious traditions have to be re-written periodically. It is precisely the historicity of the historian mentioned above. A history of, say, the Buddhist tradition in Japan written in 1971 will considerably differ from one written a hundred years earlier, and this

not only because of the greater amount of data that have become available since then, but also because of the different *Verstehens-horizont* of the respective historians. Although it may seem as if this could not be subsumed any more under the notion of accumulating data, in the eyes of many it will be just this since it is not concerned with contemporary social and existential religious issues.

As to the concept of understanding in *Religionswissenschaft*, there are several problems connected with it that need at least mention here. The first is the question whether it is possible at all to understand another man's religious faith, especially when he belongs to a culture that is strange and unfamiliar to the researcher either because of the remoteness in time or in place. Without going into further detail, it can be stated with M. Eliade (28, p. 31) that there is not one creation of the human mind that is not, at least to a certain extent, accessible to our understanding.

A more difficult question is the methodological problem of understanding as such. The literature on the concept of the *geisteswissenschaftliche Verstehen* is growing rapidly. History of religions cannot ignore what philosophy as well as history in general have to say on it.

b) *On Religionswissenschaft and its Relation to Other Sciences*

Historians of religions simply cannot afford to overlook the *Fragestellungen* and the attempts at their solution, nor the results of the research in other, cognate fields of study. Unfortunately, all too often, history of religions does ignore what other disciplines have to say. This does not only lead to an impoverishment of the discussions carried on in *Religionswissenschaft* but results also in the danger of isolationism. "Esoteric" doctrines are developed that are dismissed by scholars in other fields as being of a dilettantish nature and therefore irrelevant to them, and/or the discipline as such is discredited. A renewal of history of religions will, to a large extent, depend on the willingness and ability of its representatives to become acquainted with other sciences and adopt the appropriate methods and results from them.

There are then a number of fields from which *Religionswissenschaft* has to learn. First of all, there is history in general or "secular" history as it is sometimes called. It has been and is discussing a number of issues that are of vital importance to history of religions, such as the question of objectivity, "creative" representation, typology, terminol-

ogical clarity, producing historical syntheses, structures in history, methods of comparison, etc. (20; 96). Most of the historians' discussion still await incorporation into that of the *Religionswissenschaftler*.

There is, further, anthropology that is of prime importance for history of religions. Both sciences use, e.g., the method or methods of comparison, and both apply them in certain cases to the same data. It is therefore unfortunate that history of religions proceeds without taking into account the achievements of anthropology. Thus, W. A. Lessa recently criticized M. Eliade's use of comparative methods as being too little controlled and sophisticated in comparison to the way in which anthropology employs these methods (62).

Last but not at all least, there is philosophy. Even though history of religions does not want to develop a philosophy of religion, it cannot do without the help of philosophy. The necessity of philosophical clarification of the concepts, terminology, and methods of *Religionswissenschaft* has already been emphasized. What is needed though is not superficially philosophizing speculation (44, p. 39) that is of no use to anybody (88, p. 40), but rather historians of religion who are well informed about philosophical thinking, and at the same time realistic enough to recognize the limitations of the non-professional philosopher. Only in this way the Scylla of philosophical naiveté and the Charybdis of amateur philosophizing can be avoided.

When talking about *Religionswissenschaft* in relation to other sciences, one more question is to be considered, the question of interdisciplinary research. It is true "that no one approach to the examination of religion is adequate for all purposes" (130, p. 82) and the various methods complement each other, but certain kinds of *Methodensynkretismus* (91, col. 654) are unacceptable. The obvious example are the different methods used in history of religions on the one hand, and in theology on the other. Theology that uses methods and data of history of religions remains nevertheless theology (54, p. 64). Again, this is not to deny the "multimethodological" (63, p. 9) nature of the study of religious man in the sense that various methods contribute to the understanding of the various aspects of it. It does, therefore, not preclude the possibility of interdisciplinary research, although this presents a difficult problem for several reasons. On the one hand, the danger of "intellectual imperialism" and the mistaking

of one discipline for the other must be avoided (130, p. 82). On the other hand, interdisciplinary work should not be merely additive but synthetic. To attempt such a synthesis in the area of behavioural sciences is the aim of J. M. Yinger's book *Toward a Field Theory of Behavior* [1965]. He tries to explore the research and theoretical implications of the interdependence of the specialized disciplines. He does not want though to criticize specialization or affirm that everyone has to be competent in all of the sciences of human behaviour. He rather wants to delineate the frame of reference for specialization. It would seem that this applies also to the study of religious man. In this sense W. C. Smith's demand that priority be given to subject-matter rather than discipline (111, p. 71), is justified. But nevertheless, the fact remains that specialized disciplines with their proper methods form the basis of every attempt at an integral understanding of religious man. Already Hardy had remarked that the aim of every science is to know its object as completely as possible (35, p. 12) and that any limitation of scientific research is a consequence of the necessity of expediency.

c) *Theories in History of Religions*

H. H. Penner recently remarked that in history of religions there is no lack of data and information on the various religious traditions. But what is lacking are theories that "will enlighten us with regard to the wealth of material at our disposal" (72, p. 91).

Several years ago, M. Eliade pointed out the lack of interpretative cultural synthesis and generalizations in the field of *Religionswissenschaft* in favour of analytical research (29, pp. 58 f.). He ascribed the fact to the timidity of the historians of religion that stems from the excesses of former well known scholars in the field.

In this context it is interesting to consider what H. Albert writes on "Theorie, Verstehen und Geschichte" in the new periodical *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie — Journal for General Philosophy of Science* (2). If we want, says Albert, to investigate reality or certain sections of it, and discover its structures, and thus be able to explain systematically the phenomena, we need theories. Such theories can be regarded as free constructions of the human mind. Their validity must be tested by exposing them, as it were, to reality. Science progresses through constructs and criticism. The invention of

theoretical alternatives and the search for relevant data plays an important role therein. History though has lost its interest in the problems of theory especially since historicism has declared such problems as irrelevant. This led to a certain naiveté vis-à-vis theoretical thinking, to a specific positivism of the historians where the distrust of speculative philosophy of history was transferred to theories of every kind since the latter do violence to the unique historical facts and suppress the individuality of the historical events. Such historical positivism, Albert continues, that is satisfied with an a-theoretical reconstruction of facts, is useless. Many times the historians do not seem to be aware of the fact that the interpretation of sources necessitates innumerable theoretical assumptions (2, pp. 17 f.; 66, pp. 90 f.). It would seem that methodological reflections along these lines are also necessary for history of religions, if only to make explicit what usually remains implicit in the background. Neither historical positivism nor speculative philosophy of religious history can be the methodical principles of *Religionswissenschaft*. What is needed are explanatory theories that are tested, adjusted and re-tested, and so on, the test material being the data. Even though methodological discussions may be unattractive (13, p. 9) and secondary (88, p. 38), they are necessary, for, as H. Albert remarks, hardly anybody will contend that it is better to follow an implicit methodology that has not been reflected on, rather than have a fully elaborate position (2, p. 4). Like all the human sciences, history of religions belongs to the "‘underdeveloped’ areas of research" (79, vol. 2, p. 18) that are in need of intense theoretical reflection on their basic premises. This is the more urgent today, where "The threat of skepticism and the ensuing feeling of irrelevance manifests itself in most of the cultural sciences" (71, p. 38).

CONCLUSION

Religionswissenschaft or religiology? The answer can only be this: If religiology is taken to mean that kind of religious studies that wants to be at the same time historical and theological, theoretical and applied, a clear borderline has to be drawn between it and *Religionswissenschaft*. The two are not at all to be identified. They are distinct from each other because the historical-philological study of religion on an empirical basis is not the same as theology, or philosophy of religion, or pastoral and ecumenical concerns. Those who prefer the latter kind

of studies are, of course, always free to pursue them, but then they should not lay claim to be students of *Religionswissenschaft*. This term has come to mean something different from the forementioned disciplines and is associated with a long and, despite its youth and often quoted crises, firmly established tradition. A rethinking of the nature, task, and methods of history of religions is necessary, but a so-called renewal that results in a new form of "pastoral care", psychological help, or interreligious dialogue has left *Religionswissenschaft* and gone into a different domain.

To be sure, though, history of religions is only one way of studying religions that has to be complemented by other kinds of research if one wants to arrive at a fuller understanding of religious man.

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RELIGION BETWEEN REALITY AND IDEA

A Century of Phenomenology of Religion in the Netherlands

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The present survey ¹⁾ of the phenomenological tradition in Dutch studies of religion intends to lay bare its main tendencies through a rapid analysis of the approaches of its professional representatives ²⁾. Lack of space prevents us from even trying to summarize the actual contents of the phenomenologies they offered, so that we have to restrict ourselves to the formal side of their work ³⁾. By phenome-

1) This paper has been written on the basis of the results of a graduate seminar on the subject, which was held at the University of Utrecht, the Netherlands, in 1969-70. In its preparation we made use of the papers submitted by the participants H. A. Avakian, J. M. Barendrecht, D. Bode, D. van der Plas and J. B. K. M. Spaapen. In the discussion Professors D. J. Hoens, M. J. Vermaseren and J. Zandee from the University of Utrecht, and Professor J. H. Sasson as a guest from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N.C., U.S.A., also participated. Professors Th. P. van Baaren (Groningen), C. J. Bleeker (Amsterdam) and K. A. H. Hidding (Leyden) kindly attended the sessions devoted to their work, where also Mr. J. G. Platvoet (Utrecht) was present. At one session contributions were made by Mr. L. Leertouwer (Groningen) and Prof. Em. E. L. Smelik (Amsterdam). The author is solely responsible for the contents of this purely descriptive paper.

We want to express our sincere gratitude to Professor C. J. Heywood, of Tufts University, Medford, Mass., U.S.A., who was kind enough to correct the English style.

2) The book of H. Th. Obbink (1869-1947, University of Utrecht), *De godsdienst in zijn verschijningsvormen* (Religion in its manifestations; Groningen, Den Haag, Batavia: J. B. Wolters, 1933, 1947²), as well as its predecessor *Godsdienstwetenschap* (Groningen, Den Haag: J. B. Wolters, 1920), and the work of his son and successor H. W. Obbink (Professor Emeritus, University of Utrecht) have not been considered here. The pupils of the seven scholars treated have not been mentioned either.

3) For reasons of space the bibliographical data cover only publications in English and are largely restricted to books. For existing bibliographies the references are given. For bibliographical data of and on Tiele, Chantepie de la Saussaye, Kristensen and Van der Leeuw, see our *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, vol. II (Religion and Reason, 4). The Hague: Mouton, 1973.

nologist we mean here those who considered themselves to be so and who have developed an explicit phenomenology of religion or who have devoted part of their studies to explicitly phenomenological work⁴). All of them were concerned with the systematic study of religion through its phenomena and had in common the desire to interrogate religious data for their meaning, while trying to avoid imposing personal value judgments on such data. We have taken their work as it presented itself, the motivations and tendencies inherent to the phenomenological approach as such being left out of consideration.

In the national universities in this country history of religions and phenomenology of religion have been taught traditionally in the Faculties of Theology, where an appointment in phenomenology of religion was always combined with an appointment in the history of religions. Most students of these faculties, during the period under consideration, became ministers in the Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, Mennonite or Remonstrant Churches and Communities in the country.

Whatever may be considered to have been the deeper causes for the rise of the systematic study of religion alongside the historical⁵), it is important to note that phenomenological research has hardly begun

4) Studies which are of phenomenological interest in the field have been made on the protestant side by J. H. Bavinck (1895-1964; in Dutch) and by H. Kraemer (1888-1965). Apart from some phenomenological publications in Dutch and his *World Cultures and World Religions: The Coming Dialogue* (London, Philadelphia, Southampton: Lutterworth Press; Philadelphia: Westminster Press; Lucknow Press, 1960), Kraemer wrote "An Attempt at a Phenomenology of Islam" as Part II of his projected study "Islam in a Christian Perspective". Unfortunately this study has not been completed and the relevant Part II is only available in manuscript. On the Roman Catholic side the studies of K. L. Bellon (1891-1957) and especially of H. M. M. Fortmann (1912-1970) are of phenomenological interest, but they are only available in Dutch.

5) A historical survey and appreciation of the history of religions as a discipline has been given by Jan de Vries, *Godsdienstgeschiedenis in vogelvlucht* (Utrecht, Antwerpen: Het Spectrum, Aula nr. 56, 1961). English translation: *The Study of Religion. A Historical Approach*. Translated with an introduction by Kees W. Bolle (New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967). Important for both the history and the theory of the study of religion is the recent book by J. van Baal, *Symbols for Communication. An introduction to the anthropological study of religion* (Assen, Van Gorcum & Comp. N.V. — Dr. H. J. Prakke & H. M. G. Prakke, 1971). Compare also "View of a Hundred Years' Study of Religion" in our *Classical Approach to the Study of Religion*, vol. I (Religion and Reason, 3). The Hague: Mouton, 1972, pp. 1-77.

to be carried out on religion in the Netherlands itself, or on Christianity and Judaism in general 6), and that religion has only recently been considered here from the point of view of the social sciences 7). On the other hand, much work on religious studies has been done in the

6) An exception are the studies of W. H. van de Pol, *Karakteristiek van het Reformatorisch Christendom* (Roermond and Maaseik: J. J. Romen & Zonen, 1952) and of K. H. Miskotte, *Het wezen der Joodse religie* (Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1933; Haarlem: Mij. Holland, 1964²). They present a phenomenology of Protestantism and of recent developments in Judaism respectively, with much attention paid to the doctrinal and experiential contents.

A sociological study of religion in the Netherlands is presented by Leo Layendecker, "The Netherlands", in: Hans Mol, ed., *Western Religion. A country by country sociological inquiry* (Religion and Reason, 2). The Hague: Mouton, 1972, pp. 325-363.

7) We would like to mention in this connection the work of F. Sierksma (Leyden): *The Gods as We Shape Them* (London: Routledge, 1960; Dutch *De mens en zijn goden*, Amsterdam: Djambatan, 1959; German *Götter, Götzen und Dämonen*, Wien, Hannover, Basel, 1959; Italian *L'uomo e i suoi dei*, Firenze, 1960); *Tibet's Terrifying Deities. Sex and Aggression in Religious Acculturation* (The Hague, Paris: Mouton, 1966). Compare for the latter also "Sacred cairns in pastoral cultures" (*History of Religions*, II (1963), pp. 227-241; "Rtsod-pa: the monachal disputations in Tibet" (*Indo-Iranian Journal*, VIII (1964), pp. 130-152). See also "Quelques remarques sur la circoncision en Israël", *Oud-Testamentische Studiën*, IX (1951), pp. 136-170. Sierksma published three studies in the field of psychology of religion in Dutch: *Phaenomenologie der religie en complexe psychologie* (Phenomenology of religion and complex psychology); commercial edition under the title of *Freud, Jung en de religie* (Freud, Jung and religion), Assen: Van Gorcum, 1951 (with a summary in English); *De religieuze projectie. Een anthropologische studie over de projectie-verschijnselen in de godsdiensten* (Religious projection. An anthropological study on the phenomena of projection in the religions), Delft: W. Gaade, 1956, 1957²; *Profiel van een incarnatie. Het leven en de conflicten van een Tibetaanse geestelijke in Tibet en Europa* (Profile of an incarnation. The life and the conflicts of a Tibetan monk in Tibet and Europe), Amsterdam: G. A. van Oorschot, 1964. He published two books in the field of anthropology of religion in Dutch: *Een nieuwe hemel en een nieuwe aarde. Messianistische en eschatologische bewegingen en voorstellingen bij primitieve volken* (A new heaven and a new earth. Messianic and eschatological movements and representations among primitive peoples), The Hague: Mouton, 1961; *De roof van het vrouwengeheim. De mythe van de dictatuur der vrouwen en het ontstaan der geheime mannengenootschappen* (The robbery of the secret of women. The myth of the dictatorship of women and the origin of the secret societies of men), The Hague: Mouton, 1962.

The work of J. van Baal (Utrecht), of a properly anthropological nature, is left here out of consideration. An exception should be made for his *Over wegen en drijfveren der religie. Een godsdienstpsychologische studie* (On ways and motivations of religion. A study in psychology of religion). Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1947. For his recent *Symbols for Communication*, see Note 5.

Faculties of Arts, especially in the fields of classical and oriental languages, literatures and history. The study of religion as an academic discipline, however, has developed in the Faculties of Theology rather than in those of the Arts and Social Sciences ⁸⁾.

C. P. TIELE (1830-1902)

Although Tiele ⁹⁾ is more widely known as a historian of religion, there are philosophical and methodological hints in his work, which are phenomenologically relevant; moreover, in his later years he explicitly pleaded for phenomenological analysis. Another reason to start with Tiele is the fact that several phenomenologists opposed themselves to Tiele's concept of a development of religious consciousness and that their work contains elements of reactions to that of Tiele.

8) On the history of the study of religion in the Netherlands in general, see alongside the publications on individual scholars: B. A. van Proosdij, "A century of the History of Religion in the Netherlands. An ecological outline", in *Books on Religion* (Catalogue E. J. Brill, Stockholm 16-22 August 1970), Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970, pp. I-XI; O. Schreuder, "Trends in the Sociology of Religion in the Netherlands, 1960-69", *Sociologia Neerlandica*, VI (1970), pp. 129-136; K. Yoroi, "Oranda no Shûkyo-gaku Kenkyû" (History of Religions in the Netherlands), *Journal of Religious Studies* (Japanese Association for Religious Studies, University of Tokyo), XLIII, 1 (December 1969), pp. 139-161. A definite study on the subject is prepared by H. Buning.

9) Born in 1830, Tiele studied theology at the University of Amsterdam and at the Remonstrants' Seminary. He became a Remonstrant minister in 1853 and a professor at the Remonstrants' Seminary in Leyden in 1873. In 1877 Tiele occupied the new chair of the History of Religions and Philosophy of Religion at the University of Leyden, in the Faculty of Theology. He retired in 1900 and died at Leyden in 1902. The Remonstrants are the old Arminians and represent since three centuries and a half a liberal trend within Dutch protestantism.

For bibliographical data, see our *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, II (Religion and Reason, vol. 4). The Hague: Mouton, 1973. The following books written by C. P. Tiele exist in English translation (in the order of the publication dates in Dutch): (1) *History of the Egyptian Religion* (*Comparative History of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian Religions*, Vol. I). Boston and New York, 1882; London, 1882, 1884². The Dutch text was published in 1869. (2) *Outlines of the History of Religion, to the Spread of the Universal Religions*. London: Trübner & Co., 1877, 1880², 1892⁵. The Dutch text was published in 1876. (3) *Western Asia, according to the most recent discoveries* [*the Tell el-Amarna Tablets*]. London, 1893, 1894². The Dutch text was a Rectorial Address of 1893. (4) *Elements of the Science of Religion*. Part I: *Morphological*. Part II: *Ontological*. Gifford Lectures delivered before the University of Edinburgh in 1896 and 1898, 2 vols. Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons; New York: Scribner's and Son, 1897-1899. The Dutch text was published in the same years.

Tiele's definition of *religion*¹⁰⁾ is of a phenomenological nature, religion being "...the aggregate of all those phenomena which are invariably termed religious, in contradistinction to ethical, aesthetical, political and others. I mean those manifestations of the human mind in words, deeds, customs, and institutions which testify to man's belief in the superhuman, and serve to bring him into relation with it"¹¹⁾. The object of research is not this superhuman itself, but religion based on belief in the superhuman. Its aim is to investigate religion as a human phenomenon and its field are all religions and "...all the religious phenomena which present themselves to our observation"¹²⁾. Their unity "...is the human mind, which reveals itself nowhere so completely as in these, and whose manifestations...always spring from the same source"¹²⁾. A judgment is implied in as far as the researcher makes comparisons and classifications of religious manifestations "...in accordance with the stage and direction of their development"¹³⁾; such a judgment is critical in as far as he must point out retrogression from a higher to a lower plane, distinguish religious facts which really belong to a different domain, and eliminate pathological phenomena. "He takes up...an entirely objective position towards all *forms* of religion, but distinguishes them carefully from religion itself. Religion reveals itself in every one of these forms more or less imperfectly — and so he studies them all"¹⁴⁾. Mentioning that he belongs himself to one particular religious community, Tiele states: "I strive to appreciate, by the light of our science, what is truly religious in other forms"¹⁵⁾.

The deeper concern of the *study of religion* is the question what the religion which reveals itself in the phenomena, really is and whence it takes its origin. In the last analysis this "...is the philosophical part of the investigation of religious phenomena — a study which seeks

See also the article "Religions" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9th edition (1884). There are more translations available in German than in English.

10) We use as source here the Gifford Lectures which Tiele delivered in 1896 and 1898, and which were published under the title of *Elements of the Science of Religion*, in two volumes, in 1897 and 1899.

11) *Elements*, Vol. I, p. 4.

12) *Ibid.*, p. 6 (both quotations).

13) *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

14) *Ibid.*, p. 9.

15) *Ibid.*, p. 11. Tiele was a Remonstrant; comp. note 9.

to penetrate to their foundations" 16). Tiele points out the philosophical character of the study of religion, with its deductive method 17), but "... our deductive reasoning must start from the results yielded by induction, by empirical, historical, and comparative methods" 18). The final aim of the discipline is to know religion, on one hand, in its life and growth, and on the other hand in its essence and origin. Its first part is that of *morphology*: the study of the changes and transformations which are the result of a continuing development or evolution. Its second part is that of *ontology*: the study of the permanent in all changes, of the immutable in all passing forms, which is the core and the source of religion. For this ontology a "phenomenological-analytic" study is needed, i.e. a study of religious phenomena in each stage of development.

Religion basically is a "disposition of the heart" which is applied to the relation between man and his God; consequently it is a certain disposition of the heart with regard to that God. For any understanding of it, it is necessary to know the representation and thus the intention of the believers: only those acts are relevant for scholarly inquiry, the religious meaning of which can still be found through the corresponding representations 19).

By "development" 20) Tiele means a process which constitutes a unity, in which all later stages are potentially present in the earlier ones, and in which each phase owes its value to the fact that it is necessary for the emergence of what is higher. Tiele's hypothesis of the development of religion is based explicitly on his conviction of the unity and independence of religious life in all the changes of its external forms: it is the development of the *homo religiosus*, of mankind as being religious by nature. This development of religion is immediately connected with that of man's mind: if man develops, e.g., in knowledge, his religion has to run parallel to that development. A development of religious phenomena takes place only insofar as man's "disposition of the heart", which determines the relationship between

16) *Ibid.*, p. 15.

17) *Ibid.*, p. 18. This in contrast to the empirical ("positivistic"), historical, and genetic-speculative ("speculative") methods.

18) *Ibid.*, p. 18.

19) *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

20) This subject is treated in Volume I, Chapter 2.

man and his God, has become purer so that the insight of man into the essence of that relationship has become clearer. The changes of the forms of religion show then a process of evolution, being essentially the revelation of an inner life: the religious idea and the religious need come, through the development of the human mind, to a more adequate and more perfect expression.

Tiele contends that it is only possible to know what is permanent and essential in religion through the observation of religion in the different forms in which it has appeared ²¹). This is its *morphology*. In the interpretation of these forms he distinguishes: (1) *Grades* or *morphes* of development coming forth one from the other (resulting into a morphological classification of religions in lower and in higher nature religions, and in ethical religions); (2) *directions* of development as the unilateral elaboration of a particular fundamental religious idea to its utmost consequences (resulting into the distinction of theocratic and theanthropic directions); (3) *laws* to which the development of the human mind is subject and which are by way of inference applicable to religion (three such laws are formulated). In their course of development the human mind and religion first came from a plurality of forms to a certain unity; in the subsequent process of differentiation Tiele sees a dreading particularism and an increasing universalism. Another feature is that religion, like other sectors of human life, becomes more and more independent in itself. The very ground of the development is the fact that man becomes more and more conscious of what he is and needs as a religious being, that is, of the essence and demands of religion in him. This is, like all development of the human mind, basically a progress in self-consciousness.

While "morphology" deals with the changing forms of religion and investigates the nature of their changes, "*ontology*" deals with what is permanent in religion. This is treated in volume II of the *Elements* and consists of a phenomenological-analytical and of a psychological-synthetic part ²²). In the *phenomenological-analytical* part Tiele distinguishes "revelation forms" (words and acts) and "constituent parts" (emotion, representation and disposition) of religion. While religion for Tiele essentially is a "disposition of the heart", its realm proper is

21) *Ibid.*, p. 52.

22) *Elements*, Vol. II, Chapters 1-7 and 8-10 respectively.

"the depth of the heart". He defines this in a characteristic manner: "Our religion, that are we ourselves, inasmuch as we have raised ourselves above what is finite and transitory" ²³). In this phenomenological part are successively treated the representations (including philosophy and dogmatics, the concept of God and the representation of the Divine, kinship of man with God), the cult (based on faith in the reality of a communion of man and his God, between the finite and the infinite), and religion as a social fact. The second part of the "ontology" is the *psychological-synthetic* part; this is so called probably because Tiele studies religion as a relationship which is determined by a "disposition of the heart", consequently as a psychological reality. The search for the essence and origin of religion has man as its focus. This psychological-synthetic part contains three chapters: investigation of the essence of religion (i.e. adoration of the superhuman power on which man feels himself dependent), investigation of the origin of religion (i.e. the increased feeling in man of infinity within him, or of his sharing in Infinity, as inherent in the human mind), and the place of religion in the life of the mind (the religious need is a general human need; it is moreover the most powerful and deepest of all human needs). At the end of his book Tiele mentions the possibility of a new revelation of religious life in future.

In a later publication ²⁴), Tiele takes up again these subjects in a shortened form. On the "morphology" follows again the "ontology" in a phenomenological-analytical and in a psychological-synthetic part. He states that religion is a general human phenomenon, and that the way in which it has manifested itself as well as the elements of which it is composed are the same always and everywhere; through analyzing religion one is able to discover and to study such permanently recurring phenomena.

Throughout his work, Tiele defended his views reasonably against possible objections. His "laws" of development of religion should not be understood in the same way as the "laws" of the sciences. He was fascinated by the evolution of man's mind, which is particularly evident in the history of religions, and the fact that religion has developed in the course of time was for him a basic value. Evidently, in his

²³) *Ibid.*, Vol. II, end of Chapter 1.

²⁴) *Hoofdtrekken der Godsdienstwetenschap*, Amsterdam: P. N. van Kampen & Zn, 1901.

judgments on and in his classifications of religion and religious phenomena, Tiele worked with religious criteria; the analyst will observe that many a scholarly concept of Tiele was actually a transformed ethico-religious value.

Tiele created the study of religion from the sources practically out of nothing ²⁵⁾ and made it to an autonomous and recognized discipline; he thereby put fundamental questions and opened far-reaching views, and may still be called one of the creative researchers in the field ²⁶⁾. Through his "comparative history of religion", his "morphology" and "ontology" he was, after all, in search of the origin and essence of religion. He kept at a certain distance to the theories on religion which were current in his time, though he had an antipathy against the "anthropological" school of E. B. Tylor and a sympathy for the "comparative" school of Max Müller. After twenty-five years of mainly historical work he came to attempt a systematic phenomenology which went beyond an external classification. His insistence that religion manifests itself in the phenomena, and that this happens through the activity of the human mind, has a phenomenological flavour, just as the idea that religions are different expressions of Religion — which as a tendency slumbers in every man —, and the idea that comparative research of the forms of religion opens the way to research on religion itself. Tiele's phenomenology had not only a formal but also a material character; it also had a dynamic character because of his notion of evolution of the human mind.

P. D. CHANTEPIE DE LA SAUSSAYE (1848-1920)

The main work of Chantepie de la Saussaye ²⁷⁾, the *Manual of the*

25) There existed no "history of religions" beyond "natural theology" when Tiele was a student. One of the publications of the most prominent scholar in this field at the time, J. H. Scholten's *Godsdienst en Wijsbegeerte* of 1859, counts about twenty pages on what may be called "history of religions".

26) His range of study and publications on the basis of sources read in the original languages stretched from Persian and Akkadian to Egyptian and West Semitic religions; for the time, with its lack of technical tools like dictionaries etc., this means a real achievement.

27) Born in 1848, Chantepie de la Saussaye studied theology at the University of Utrecht and obtained the Th. D. degree in 1871. He became a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church and occupied in 1878 the new chair of the History of Religions at the University of Amsterdam. He stayed until 1899 in Amsterdam and moved then to Leyden, where he occupied the chair of "Theological Ency-

Science of Religion ²⁸), was in its first edition divided into an introductory, a phenomenological, an ethnographical and an historical section. The first, *introductory section* is intended to present material for a brief treatment of the main questions of the study of religion, without entering, however, into a philosophical discussion of these questions. De la Saussaye discusses here the rise of the science of religion, which was possible (a) through the immense increase of new source materials (Eastern languages and literatures, mythology and folklore, archeology, ethnography, etc.); (b) through the philosophy of Kant, Schleiermacher and especially Hegel, who considered religion as one phenomenon, being an object of philosophical knowledge with special attention given to the religious relationship ²⁹); (c) through the fact that world history, being the life of mankind as a whole, had become a philosophical subject. For Chantepie de la Saussaye the study of religion divides itself logically into that of the essence and that of the manifestations of religion, being subjects of the philosophy and the history of religion respectively; the history of religions falls into

clopaedia, Doctrine of God and Ethics" in the Faculty of Theology, from 1899 onwards. He retired in 1916 and died at Bilthoven in 1920. Within the Dutch Reformed Church, Chantepie de la Saussaye was one of the representatives of the so-called "ethical theology" stressing the value of religion as a reality of the heart and as an existential datum, with ethical implications.

For bibliographical data see our *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, II (Religion and Reason, vol. 4). The Hague: Mouton, 1973. Besides the *Manual of the Science of Religion* (see note 28) there is one more publication of Chantepie de la Saussaye in English: *The Religion of the Teutons*. Boston and London: Given & Co., 1902.

28) *Manual of the Science of Religion*. London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1891. This is the English translation of the original German edition, *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte*, 2 vols., Freiburg i.Br., 1887-1889. Chantepie de la Saussaye was the author of the first edition, and the editor of the second and third editions of the *Lehrbuch der Religionsgeschichte* in 1897 and 1905. These later editions have not been translated into English.

29) "The unity of religion in the variety of its forms is what is presupposed by the science of religion" (*Manual*, p. 8). In the preceding paragraphs, de la Saussaye stresses the importance of Hegel for "modern philosophy of religion": "But we must recognise Hegel as its true founder, because he first carried out the vast idea of realising, as a whole, the various modes for studying religion (metaphysical, psychological, and historical), and made us see the harmony between the idea and the realisation of religion. No one approaches him in this respect. Hegel thus gave an aim and object to the study of religion, and on this account we may well forget the many errors in his lectures on the philosophy of religion, given from 1821-1831" (p. 4).

an ethnographical section (people without history) and the historical section proper. Philosophy and history of religion, however, are interconnected: on one hand philosophy needs historical facts, on the other hand history needs philosophy: (a) to classify and judge upon religious phenomena; (b) to determine whether phenomena which present themselves as religious are indeed of a religious nature. For de la Saussaye, the transition from the history to the philosophy of religion is situated in the collecting and grouping of the various religious phenomena; establishing a well-ordered survey of the religious phenomena is the task of phenomenology of religion. Philosophy of religion, then, treats religion both according to its subjective and its objective side: it consists consequently in a psychological and a metaphysical part. The author discusses in succeeding paragraphs the subjects of: "The science of religion and the theory of evolution"; "Man and beast"; "Primitive history"; "Prehistoric archeology"; "The origin of religion". These paragraphs were deleted in the second and third editions. The introductory section contains also a paragraph on "The division of religions" in which the author, with reference to Hegel, contends that the classification of religions should be according to their essential characteristics, and that it should have its basis in the essential characteristics of the religious process itself. He distinguishes thereby between genealogical classifications like those of C. P. Tiele and Max Müller, and morphological classifications like those of Hegel, Eduard von Hartmann and also Tiele, which give a division of religious consciousness according to different points of view. The introductory section closes with a paragraph on "The principal forms of religion", treating the main concepts of animism, fetishism, polytheism, henotheism and monotheism ³⁰).

The *phenomenological section* proper may be considered as a document in the history of phenomenology of religion. It starts with some preliminary remarks in which de la Saussaye points to the close connection which exists between phenomenology of religion and psychology: it deals with facts of human consciousness; the outward forms of religion can only be understood on the basis of inward processes; the religious acts, ideas and sentiments can only be distinguished from the non-religious ones through the presence of a certain "inward relation".

30) In the third edition "totemism" was added.

Subjects like the accurate definition of this special character of religious phenomena and the precise analysis of religious consciousness are incumbent on philosophy; in this phenomenological section the author only wants to give a classification of the most important ethnographic and historical materials, and to discuss the meaning of the most important classes of religious phenomena. Since de la Saussaye considers religious acting and religious thinking to be the main categories, he treats here the most important aspects of cult and of doctrine, without wanting to impose a strictly systematic order or a theoretical division on the facts, which do not actually correspond to these facts. He also states explicitly that he is not dwelling on the contents of religious consciousness, only on its forms.

Religious acting and thinking are both preceded by religious impressions, sentiments and states, and so Chantepie de la Saussaye distinguishes three sectors in religion, which correspond with three levels of historical research. The first sector is that of cult, which is the most stable sector, the least apt to change; accordingly, we are in possession of evidence from remote and even primitive times. The second sector is that of doctrine, which is liable to quicker development and even to considerable change; here we possess documents of only a nearer past. The third sector is called that of religious sentiment: here every period, every group and every person is more or less independent; in this case our evidence is practically limited to the present. For a phenomenology of religion de la Saussaye calls special attention to the importance of cult, including the symbolic meaning and the practical objects of the ritual acts, as well as the nature of the desired communion with the god thereby.

After having given, in the first part, "Objects of worship", of this phenomenological section, a general definition of religion as "... a belief in superhuman powers combined with their worship" ³¹), de la Saussaye quotes with approval Grimme's statement: "Religion has in reality but one object, the living God who manifests Himself among all nations as the only real God" ³²), implying that, in the end, all

³¹) *Manual*, Vol. I, p. 51, of the German edition. In the second edition (1897), de la Saussaye adds that a definition would actually have been necessary as a basis of his exposition, but that this would be rather valueless without a thorough philosophical justification: so it is omitted (Vol. II, p. V).

³²) *Manual*, Vol. I, p. 51, of the German edition.

worship is meant for Him and that nothing divine can be conceived that is not really derived from Him. Consequently, for Chantepie de la Saussaye "the many objects" of religion finally are One, though they are many in human history, and these many are subject of investigation. Chantepie de la Saussaye points out that it is often difficult to determine the real object of worship in concrete cases, and that there is a close bond — important for analysis — between belief, worship, and the objects of both. They do not always constitute a unity, however: just as there are religious ideas which are never manifested by acts, there are also ritual acts which have no relation to any object. The author proceeds then to the actual description: (1) of objects of worship; (2) of religious acting and sacred persons, plus religious communities and sacred writings; (3) of religious thinking. Subsequently follow the *ethnographical* and the main, *historical sections*.

It is interesting to observe that in the second edition of the *Manual*, in 1897, the whole introductory section was reduced to two chapters only, and that the ethnological section became part of the historical section which, by the way, offers a history of religions and not a history of the development of religion. Most important for our purpose is that the phenomenological section was entirely dropped. Chantepie de la Saussaye justifies this in the preface of the second volume³³): this section had either to be considerably enlarged or to be dropped, and the choice fell on the last both for reasons of space and because of the fact — interestingly enough — that phenomenology constitutes a border discipline between history and philosophy and that it should be treated separately for that reason. He writes that he hopes to work out his ideas and his materials in this field to a new book; unfortunately but significantly, this book never appeared. In the third edition of the *Manual*, in 1905, Chantepie de la Saussaye states in the introductory section that present-day philosophy of religion has now to work in connection with newer studies in psychology and ethics³⁴).

For the background of de la Saussaye's ideas presented in the *Manual*, some other publications by him are of interest. In his Th. D. *dissertation* of 1871³⁵) he shows great concern for methodological issues; he treats here assumptions, sources and method of research on

33) *Manual*, Vol. II, p. V, of the second German edition (1897).

34) *Manual*, Vol. I, p. 5, of the third German edition (1905).

35) *Methodologische bijdrage tot het onderzoek naar den oorsprong van den*

the origin of religion, which was a much-debated issue at the time. Since the purely empirical approach fails to give definite answers, the author pleads for a philosophical approach with an intuitive-speculative method. Such an approach would not result in arbitrariness: it demonstrates the connections and the spirit of the whole, and the researcher may arrive in this way at an (individual) insight into the nature of religion and into the connections between the historical facts. De la Saussaye uses the concept of religion here on the model of a "species" comprising a number of different forms. He distinguishes three levels of research: (1) psychology, concerned with the religious moment in representations and customs and with the value and meaning which they have or had for religious life; (2) history, concerned with the factual existence of such representations and forms; (3) ontology, concerned with their essence. On this last level, de la Saussaye, characteristically, distinguishes a speculative besides a psychological aspect: the first stressing the "objective" side of religion (God speaking in nature and life), the second stressing the "subjective" side of religion, which is the realm of psychology (man reaching out for God).

There are some other interesting statements by Chantepie de la Saussaye in this dissertation, e.g. that "sources" do not exist in themselves but are dependent on the method of the researcher who chooses, judges and evaluates; and that each form of [literary or historical] criticism ought to be considered as the application of certain definite philosophical principles. Man has a spiritual nature and distinguishes himself from the rest of creation as a religious being: it is religion that is common to all men, not only because of man's mental faculties showing the need of the human mind, but more particularly because man alone can come into an actual relationship with God. Religion, for de la Saussaye, implies a subject, an object and a relationship between them. As adoration of God — whereby different religious forms are as many different ways of adoration —, religion basically finds its ground in man's relationship to God. Without recognition of this relationship, religion would have no reality; any definition of religion should take this relationship into account. In religion as such we have

*godsdiens*t (Methodological contribution to the investigation of the origin of religion), Utrecht, 1871.

to do with God, and not only with representations concerning Him; the science of religion should take this into account, and contain a speculative level which deals with the existence of, and the activity by God with regard to man.

In his further work, these starting points maintained, although the "faith" of the researcher is more stressed. In his inaugural address of 1878 ³⁶), de la Saussaye insists on the importance of the study of religion for our knowledge and understanding of Christianity. He remarks that by the knowledge of religions we come to a better knowledge of religion as such, and that this has implications for our view of Christianity. Moreover, the distinction between Christianity as being revealed and the other religions as being natural cannot longer be accepted. All religious facts hint to an infinite factor; revelation — especially in the human heart — is the becoming-known of this infinite factor.

In a paper delivered at a congress held at Stockholm in 1897 ³⁷), de la Saussaye showed himself concerned with the relationship between the study of religion on one hand and the religious faith of the researcher on the other hand. Faith belongs to another sphere than science; yet there is a relationship between both on a depth level: the results of scholarship refer back to methods, methods refer back to spiritual trends, and these finally refer back to what de la Saussaye calls "the expressions of the heart". Again, there are some interesting statements on methodology. Chantepie de la Saussaye considers the different theories on religion as as many "hypotheses" to bring order in the masses of material. It would be an illusion to hold a single survey of the material for real knowledge of religion; the "inner side" of religious experience, as expressed in representations and acts, can only be understood by analogy of one's own heart. In order to know what makes an act "religious" one needs a judgment on the inner side ("intention") and the basic force ("feeling") of the act. Such an "inner" knowledge of religion should by no means be separated

36) *Het belang van de studie der godsdiensten voor de kennis van het Christendom* (The interest of the study of religions for the knowledge of Christianity). Groningen: Noordhoff, 1878. This is his inaugurall address in Amsterdam.

37) *Die vergleichende Religionsforschung und der religiöse Glaube*. Besides in the *Acta* of this congress, the paper was published also separately with the subtitle *Vortrag gehalten auf dem ersten religionswissenschaftlichen Kongress in Stockholm, 1897*. Freiburg i.Br., 1898.

from the scientific: science knows the externals, faith knows its object in inner experience. For Chantepie de la Saussaye there is sense in the attempt to understand the religions with Christianity as starting point.

In his inaugural address of 1899³⁸⁾ a further turn is made. De la Saussaye observes a reaction from the overestimation — i.e. illusion — of science back to religion: man wants and has to go back to the depth of essence, to what is proper only to Christianity. The essence of religion is the relationship with God, which implies a negation of the world in favour of the suprasensible. The essence of religious phenomena is just their connection with God. An essay on the Absolute, of 1907³⁹⁾, harps on the same theme: whoever loses the absolute cannot but lose the essential and slide down into relativism. Chantepie de la Saussaye urges on the seriousness of the question of truth also in the field of scholarship: it is a wrong assumption that science only leads to the phenomena and that we have not to do with the essence behind them. If someone somewhere has faith in some absolute, the question imposes itself of the truth of that faith. It may seem that faith brings man into a relationship with the "power"; but ultimately it is this "power" which has led to that faith. In his farewell address of 1916⁴⁰⁾, finally, Chantepie de la Saussaye admits that in the study of religion it were the theories themselves which have been obstacles to understanding; in contrast to theory, we possess now more psychological facts and without their knowledge history cannot work. Theology, through meeting the history of religions, is forced to say goodbye to rationalistic scholasticism and is urged to come nearer to religious life itself.

Chantepie de la Saussaye looks for phenomenology to give a classification and systematization of the phenomena, or rather: he calls such a classification and systematization "phenomenology of religion". In his phenomenology he discusses the main theories existent about a

38) *De taak der Theologie* (The task of Theology). Haarlem: Erven Bohn, 1899. This is his inaugural address in Leyden.

39) "Het Absolute" (The Absolute), published in de la Saussaye's volume of essays *Geestelijke stromingen* (Haarlem: Erven Bohn, 1907), pp. 304-345.

40) *Afscheids-college van Dr. P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, Hoogleraar te Leiden. Uitgesproken op Vrijdag 2 Juni 1916* (Farewell address of Dr. P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, Professor in Leyden. Delivered on Friday, June 2nd, 1916). Haarlem: Erven Bohn, 1916.

given phenomenon, but does not delve deeply into its significance, which is the task of philosophy. He keeps to religious significance, as distinct from social, political and other non-religious meanings. He is inclined to methodological analysis and to synthesizing rather than to independent source work, for which he lacked the necessary linguistic equipment. Although he may be called a systematizer, his certainly was not a dogmatic mind; he did not like church quarrels and polemics, and he admitted critical inquiry on Christianity. For Chantepie de la Saussaye, theology and the study of religion reveal two different fundamental attitudes, both of which are significant for each other. Though all expressions of faith are necessity within the world of finitude, its direction is towards the infinite; "faith in the Infinite" is the core of piety. De la Saussaye denies any laws of development.

It would be important to investigate to what extent De la Saussaye's own religious background determined his views on other religions and on religion in general. The concept of religion was for him self-evident and indisputable. He considered Christianity as the highest and as the fulfilment of all religions; again, the existence of God and the reality of the religious relationship were for him self-evident; religious search starts for something which corresponds with one's own heart. Within religion, there is a tension between the inner religious life and the dogmatic formulations. A researcher like de la Saussaye finally approaches the religious phenomena with his own religiosity, with deep respect, because he recognizes in this field God's action with man and man's longing for God. Though giving a large place to philosophy ⁴¹⁾ and psychology in the study of religion, de la Saussaye wants to free the field from the grip of philosophical systems and reductive theories. As object of phenomenological research, Chantepie de la Saussaye sees not only the outward aspect of the religious phenomena, but also their inward meaning which has to do with an "inward relationship", and the religious consciousness which expresses itself through these phenomena. In practice, however, he deals only with the first task, and leaves the rest to philosophy as he understands it.

41) There is, however, a clear development from philosophy to theology in the change of the stress on speculative philosophy in de la Saussaye's dissertation into the stress on faith and the Absolute in his Leyden period.

W. B. KRISTENSEN (1867-1953) ⁴²⁾

The historian. In an essay of 1915, *Over waardering van historische gegevens* ⁴³⁾ (On the evaluation of historical data), Kristensen accounts for what he calls historical research. Interestingly enough, the whole temporal aspect remains outside consideration; although Kristensen liked to call himself a "historian", he was hardly concerned with any time sequence and practically used the concept of history in the sense of "the religious past". The study of this history is a descriptive discipline in which the historian has the task or calling to give himself completely to the historical materials, the documents before him. He has to abandon any superiority in order to be able recognize the independent value of the ideals, religious and otherwise, which he studies. He must be able to move toward what is foreign to him and he must have sympathy for it, since especially in the study of religious data there is an immediate relationship between sympathy and insight on the side of the researcher. Once he has given himself to this task, the historian has no way back any more: he definitely has to give up the idea of the central place of his culture and time as well as of himself.

⁴²⁾ Born in 1867 at Kristiansand (Norway), Kristensen studied at the University of Kristiania (Oslo) between 1884 and 1890, one year in the Faculty of Theology and five years in the Faculty of Arts with classics and especially history of religions as his field. Between 1890 and 1895 he studied Avesta language, Akkadian and Egyptian in Leyden and Paris. He obtained the Ph. D. degree at the University of Kristiania in 1896. Having spent another year in Paris, he became a lecturer at the University of Kristiania in 1897. Kristensen occupied in 1901 the chair of the History of Religions at the University of Leyden, as the successor of C. P. Tiele. He retired in 1937 and died in Leyden in 1953. Kristensen had become a Dutch citizen in 1913; he was a member of the Lutheran Church.

A bibliography of W. B. Kristensen has been published in his English publication *The Meaning of Religion*, pp. 497-500 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960, 1968²). Comp. the bibliographical data in our *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, II (Religion and Reason, vol. 4). The Hague: Mouton, 1973. On W. B. Kristensen, see: H. Kraemer, "Introduction", in W. Brede Kristensen, *The Meaning of Religion* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960, 1968²), pp. XI-XXV; and M. A. Beek, "Le professeur W. B. Kristensen et l'Ancien Testament", in *Liber Amicorum: Essays in Honour of Prof. Dr. C. J. Bleeker* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), pp. 14-26.

The lecture notes of W. B. Kristensen were donated to the university library in Leyden.

⁴³⁾ Republished in Kristensen's *Symbool en Werkelijkheid* (Symbol and Reality). Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1954; Palladium pocket edition, 1962, pp. 66-84.

Consequently, his very study works against his capacity to orient himself — and to take a stand — in front of other religious standpoints; his very sympathy lames his ability to act and lames his religious judgment. History “imprisons” the historian, and at any rate the historian is not a man of practice.

Kristensen opposes the “historian” to what he calls the “evolutionist”: the man who passes value judgments on history, who speaks of a “development” of history and who applies especially in the history of religions a scale of values by which he establishes an “evolution” in religion, with an origin somewhere in the far past and with the highest value assigned to his own religion in his own time. This does not mean that religious data cannot be compared with each other, or that no evaluation can be made: all this should be done, but without an evaluation from the point of view of the researcher. The only historical evaluation which Kristensen admits is an evaluation which uses the values of the people who are studied; moreover there is a “comparative history”, which uses a comparison which is not evaluative.

The historian of religion. Historical research on religion cannot but lead to the idea of a plurality of “religious centres” which are as such absolute and not comparable; the historian has to admit that his own religion is but one such a centre, thereby dropping each evaluative comparison. Although history shows the existence of values which are opposite to our own, this does not necessarily lead to scepticism: Kristensen contends that the very recognition of a plurality of religious values in mutual conflict only leads more clearly to the recognition of the essential mystery which is the heart and soul of all religions. Not only are all religions formulations of the one unspeakable impulse which gives direction to life; they also inform us that the very reality which is at the back of one’s religious sense, is both infinite and unexpressible. It is Divine Reality itself.

In an essay of 1934, *Schleiermacher’s opvatting van godsdienstgeschiedenis* ⁴⁴) (Schleiermacher’s idea of the History of Religions), Kristensen elaborates on Schleiermacher’s ideas on the discipline, with which he fundamentally agrees. First of all, he calls Herder, Schleiermacher and Creuzer explicitly “realistic”: they testify to an historical realism on the basis of their dedication to what once had

44) *Symbool en Werkelijkheid*, pp. 24-30.

been spiritual reality, and they use a creative imagination as a means to conceive of this reality. As to Schleiermacher, when he sees religion as *Anschauung des Universums*, he means by *Anschauung* the intuitive capacity to conceive of a spiritual reality, and by *Universum* something equalling God, to be contemplated in its "phenomena", whereby each phenomenon finds itself in an infinite connection, i.e. a connection with the infinite *Universum*. The religious emotion is roused in man, when the activity of the *Universum* touches him and when he becomes conscious of it. In this way Schleiermacher laid the foundation for a history of religions which comes as near as possible to religious reality, i.e. "the absolute belief of all believers". Religions, then, have absolute validity, but this validity is not general but individual: each religion is, and by definition must be, absolute — only — to its own believers.

The historian of religions, then, has an interest in the outlook of the believers and in the way in which they describe religious reality. This religious reality is the "subjective" from of "objective" divine reality. The historian of religions, like the symbolists, wants to find the "hidden" sense of the external facts, by (re)discovering the religious *Anschauung*, the view of religious reality, which once lived in the hearts of the believers. In doing this, he aims at disclosing something of the infinity of Divine Reality.

Christianity. An illustration and application of this approach is given in the author's essay on *De absoluteitheid van het Christendom* ⁴⁵⁾ (The absoluteness of Christianity), which dates from 1928. The definition itself runs along the lines indicated: "Christianity is the religion of those who call themselves with full conviction "Christians". It lives in the hearts of the believers and exists nowhere else". Religious life is absolute; the content of faith is a divine gift which has for the person concerned a thoroughly objective character. Still stronger: one's faith is a divine gift and has for one's consciousness nothing to do with the faith of others. If Christianity is absolute for us — and it is —, then we must suppose the absoluteness of other religions — for their believers — too. Consequently, when we see that only the believer himself can speak of the absoluteness of his faith — that he is the only source for any knowledge about that faith as it is —, then the

45) *Ibid.*, pp. 85-96.

road is open to come to an understanding of religions other than Christianity, at least approximately.

Understanding of religion. We have to look now more precisely at what Kristensen meant by "historical understanding" of a religion other than one's own. We use hereby the text of the lectures given by him in Oslo in 1946⁴⁶), and especially that of the first, introductory lecture. He establishes again that the historian has not to give an evaluation from his own point of view: his sole effort should be to understand the evaluation which the believers themselves gave of their own religion. These believers, by definition, conceived of their own religion as an absolute entity, as an absolute value; and his "belief of the believers" is the only religious reality with which the historian has to do. He has to recognize and to study the independent value of each individual religion as it lived in the hearts of the people concerned. He has to listen to what the believers of a religion tell themselves, and, since he cannot work without any evaluation at all, he has to give an evaluation from the point of view of those believers. This indeed is for Kristensen the rule of the craft: (1) in order to understand a religion, we have to realize its absolute value; (2) each religion is, according to the belief of the believers, an absolute entity and should be understood as such; (3) in order to come to such an understanding, we have to measure the religion under study only with its own measure. It should be admitted, however, that, since we cannot experience it as the believers could, we cannot arrive at such a perfect understanding as they could have it themselves⁴⁷). Besides the technical difficulties with which the historian has to cope — the available literary documents, the necessary language knowledge, etc. — the historian's main handicap consists in his own rationalistic views and attitudes, due to the time in which he himself lives. He has, so to say, to go back

46) *Religionshistorisk studium*. Oslo, 1954. Dutch translation by J. Kristensen-Heldring: *Inleiding tot de godsdienstgeschiedenis* (Introduction to the history of religions). Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus, 1955. The page numbers refer to the Dutch edition.

47) The historian has a distance between himself and the object which he studies; he can only arrive at an imaginative re-experiencing of a situation foreign to him. The believer, on the other hand, identifies himself with that object: he has a direct experience of reality which asserts itself with sovereign authority. "The 'existential' nature of the religious datum is never disclosed by research" (*Inleiding*, p. 7).

in and beyond Western intellectual history and the Greek enlightenment with its rational frame of mind, which he should put off if he really wants to understand a religious apprehension that did not know of such a rationalism or enlightenment, like the religious views of Mediterranean Antiquity. In this respect Kristensen makes an absolute contrast between Christian and Classical civilization and religion on one hand, and those of Antiquity on the other hand.

In the course of his exposition Kristensen makes some statements which are of particular interest in view of the way in which he conceived the objectivity of historical research. "If our opinion on a foreign religion deviates from the opinion and evaluation of the believers themselves, then we talk about ourselves and have no longer to do with historical reality" ⁴⁸). Consequently, the object of research — the belief of the believers — contains in itself also the criterion of truth; the historian should "discover" that the belief studied is right indeed: that is the sign that he has understood correctly. Kristensen bursts out vehemently against "...the disastrous compulsion toward psychological orientation... it diverts attention and interest from objective reality and reduces historical insight to a product of our phantasy..." ⁴⁹). He turns here against thinkers who deny in principle the possibility of an objective knowledge of the past and contend that all historical insight only reflects the belief or conviction of the observer. Evidently, he took a possible reproach of subjectivism very seriously: "All difficulties make us strive for a continuing study aimed at an insight that does right to reality and that purports to the leading religious forces throughout the course of history" ⁵⁰). This assertion shows both the faith of the scholar in the validity of what he is doing and the fact that this interest in "the leading religious forces" in the history of mankind was one of the leading intentions behind the work of Kristensen. We may assume that he was aware of the fundamental problems implied in his calling the "belief of the believers" an "historical reality", and calling "historical reality" — and especially this kind of "historical reality" — objective without further qualification.

Kristensen opposes the scholarly study of "foreign" religions to the

⁴⁸) *Inleiding*, p. 22.

⁴⁹) *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵⁰) *Ibid.*, p. 24.

natural tendency to consider all foreign religion as idolatry or superstition; it is legitimate research both on external facts and on the forces which were inspiring the believers. He leaves aside, characteristically, the religions without written documents, since the cultural distance would be too great to make an adequate understanding of these "primitive" religions possible: the life of the mind is oriented in another way, sympathy is more difficult since no connection is felt with our own life, and so any understanding remains incomplete. He expects the opposite from his study of the religions of Antiquity, where written documents have been preserved and where we can speak of religion as a proper force of a whole civilization.

The author pursues and makes a rigid distinction between all Western religion on one hand (Egyptian, Semitic, Persian, Greek, Roman religion, and that of the Northern people), and all Eastern religions on the other; the thought world of the East can hardly be brought together in one view with that of the West on which he concentrates himself. Now the Western religions, according to Kristensen, have many traditions and views in common, so that they would have known each other and understood each other's religious attitude. The common traits indicate a common ancient apprehension of reality or orientation of life: there would be a common religious basis, though with different "national" elaborations. Kristensen then establishes in the different religions of Antiquity the presence of ritual mysteries and particular symbolisms which constitute evidence of *one mystery religion which was held in common*, and the basic idea of which was, that the "absolute" life is life and death together⁵¹), and that the "totality" unites the opposites. Similar traits and basic ideas held in common betray a spiritual affinity between the different religions of Antiquity, which, according to Kristensen, is not to be seen as the result of

51) This idea recurs in different formulations: life finds its fulfilment in death, absolute life is part of death, death is potential life arising in resurrection which is mystery, man is first participating in a life which exists in the country of death and arising in resurrection to life, spontaneous divine life is arising out of death, etc. All these formulations turn around the life-and-death problem in connection with Absolute Life. Kristensen in a later stage also found and stressed the harmonization of two opposites in the oneness of the totality. Kristensen would establish that, in view of this mystery religion and its underlying religious solutions, a number of religious data acquire a clearly recognizable symbol character, the meaning of which would be easily identifiable.

historical borrowings⁵²), but which reveal a common religious intention within a cosmic world and life orientation. We are here at the heart of Kristensen's phenomenological work.

The use of comparisons. Over and against the "evaluating comparison" of XIXth century Comparative Religion, the author defends an "informative comparison": the search for a common view underlying different religions (e.g. on life and death), in order to make special forms in these religions (e.g. sacrifices) understandable. Such a "comparative" history of religion is not looking for an historical origin⁵³), but for the "religious idea" which characterizes one or more groups of phenomena, or the common view which is the basis of the concrete forms⁵⁴). Consequently, such forms can be understood in two ways: either in their historical particularity, or in the general view on life and world, under which they are subsumed. As a matter of principle, there is behind each particular religious phenomenon a fundamental religious view, which it shares generally and which is the key to the understanding of the particular phenomenon. The comparative method serves as an inference-method to clarify the unknown meaning of a phenomenon when the meaning of an analogous phenomenon is known⁵⁵). It can lead to the discovery of the religious idea or the common view which would characterize groups of phenomena like altars, sacrifices⁵⁶), oracles, etc.; it can also be a means to

52) It was a postulate of Kristensen, that religion cannot be "borrowed": in this field each people is sovereign (*Inleiding*, p. 38).

53) According to Kristensen, it is useless to look for historical origins since history itself is a creative process (*Inleiding*, p. 114).

54) In order that such an idea or view can be found, its meaning should have found expression in accompanying texts or in other clear particulars, e.g. iconographic details. This was one of the reasons of Kristensen's concern for "documents" and absolutely reliable sources. Where these are absent, scholarly research itself is meaningless.

55) In the search of "the religious idea", as a matter of principle all analogous data can be used. "It is not important in which religion we find them. We must then try to see whether they do not clarify other cases where the religious meaning comes less clearly to light. Thus data from one religion can shed light on data from another because the meaning of the former happens to be clearer than that of the latter" (*Meaning*, p. 3). Kristensen nowhere indicates the methodological limits of such inferences and analogous conclusions.

56) Comp. for the sacrifice, e.g.: "...we must pay attention to that which in the action and conception of the various peoples is common to the basic idea of sacrifice... It is the common meaning of the sacrificial acts that is important, and that we must try to understand" (*Meaning*, p. 3).

discover a fundamental religious view or the background of a whole set of groups of phenomena ⁵⁷). Generally speaking, the comparative method leads to a deeper insight into the religious and universal meaning of each particular and specific phenomenon.

The difficulty is that Kristensen considered such an "informative comparison" as not in possession of a general "method" ⁵⁸). Every researcher has to work in his own way, according to his own "method", though with an intuitive presentiment in order to distinguish the data which are of essential and important significance from those which are not, after which he should be able to listen what kind of *essentialia* those essential data have to tell. There are high demands on the personality of the researcher, who must have the insight to conceive the spiritual reality e.g. of a person, who must have a creative activity of the mind in order to express this insight, and who must have an extreme sensitivity for religious values as a precondition for any religious understanding. Phenomenological work in the sense of Kristensen presupposes not only the existence of general views or religious ideas behind certain groups of religious phenomena, but also the researcher's capacity to disclose them.

After having treated then in the first, *historical*, part of his book different religions of the Western group — those of the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians and of the Avesta —, Kristensen treats in the second, *phenomenological*, part the three phenomena of sacrifice, altar and statue. He distinguishes here phenomenology from history in the sense that the latter does historical source work, while the former develops a comparative view of religious data. In comparative research the interest is focussed on what is the deeper common basis of a group of phenomena or of a group of religions ⁵⁹); the determination by

57) Kristensen is not clear in distinguishing "common view" (of a category of phenomena) and "fundamental view" (the underlying meaning of whole sets of such categories). This blending of what is "common" and what is "fundamental" has noticeable consequences for his way of interpreting individual phenomena.

58) *Inleiding*, p. 18.

59) Again, Kristensen does not distinguish these two sharply. One cannot but have the impression, that his interest in the "common basis" of a group of phenomena arose in a way such as to grasp a "fundamental religious view" behind the religions of Antiquity as such, and this intuitively. Kristensen probably would have legitimated the whole search for the meaning of groups of concrete phenomena (sacrifices, altars, etc.) in terms of the existence of such a fundamental

time and place comes thereby at the background. Intuition plays a still greater role in comparative research than in source work. Comparative research remains a historical discipline, so that phenomenology could also be called "systematic" or "comparative" history. Kristensen explicitly states that phenomenology, as he sees it, does not give an evolutionistic, dogmatic or philosophical elaboration of what is given historically.

Values. One might mention a particularly significant outburst of the author in this part of the book. When he deals with sacrifice, Kristensen refutes vehemently the theory that in certain sacrifices man could help or even oblige God: "The idea, that God in his work would receive a helping hand and a strengthening, does not have its root in religious life" ⁶⁰). A passage like this is indicative of the fact that Kristensen, in his scholarly work, had very definite ideas about the nature of the relationship between God and man; these ideas were connected with particular religious experiences, here referred to as "religious life". Immediately afterwards he states that, while the relation from man to man is a psychological reality and can be investigated, the relation from man to God is a religious-mystical reality which cannot be investigated rationally ⁶¹). This, too, is illuminating for the way in which he conceived, in a self-evident way, the relation between man and God, apart from the light it throws on what Kristensen wanted to sustract from rational inquiry. In his work, Kristensen had definite religious views himself ⁶²).

Phenomenology, history and philosophy. *The Meaning of Religion* contains not only most of the results of Kristensen's phenomenological work, but also elements of his methodology as outlined in the "General

religious view. The trend of the scholar's research and search is toward finding deeper views of religious truth underneath or at the basis of historical differences and divergencies.

60) *Inleiding*, pp. 118-119, also pp. 122-123.

61) *Inleiding*, p. 119.

62) Compare the important statement, in his refutation of Rudolf Otto's conclusions on "the Holy": "We do not need to make a particular application of the concept "holiness" to any object for holiness is the most essential element in reality itself" (*Meaning*, p. 17). Comp. also: "It is indeed presupposed in historical and phenomenological study that holiness is also a religious reality for us, a reality *sui generis*. This is an *a priori* assumption in our research" (*Ibid.*, p. 18).

Introduction" of the book. The author sets out defining phenomenology in the following way:

"Phenomenology of Religion is the systematic treatment of History of Religion. That is to say, its task is to classify and group the numerous and widely divergent data in such a way that an over-all view can be obtained of their religious content and the religious values they contain. This general view is not a condensed History of Religion, but a systematic survey of the data" ⁶³).

"...it takes out of their historical setting the similar facts and phenomena which it encounters in different religions, brings them together, and studies them in groups... The purpose of such study is to become acquainted with the religious thought, idea or need which underlies the group of corresponding data... The comparative consideration of corresponding data often gives a deeper and more accurate insight than the consideration of each datum by itself, for considered as a group, the data shed light upon one another. Phenomenology tries to gain an over-all view of the ideas and motives which are of decisive importance in all of History of Religion" ⁶⁴).

When phenomenology has "...to consider the phenomena, not only in their historical context but also in their ideal connection" ⁶⁵), the debate is open as to what to understand by "ideal connection". It appears that for Kristensen the discovery that something some time was sacred made him search for what he called the "religious idea" as the basis of it, for the "religious value" which it represented for the adherents of this sacredness, and finally for the particular elaboration which was given of it in each case. His characteristic trend of thought wanted to see, e.g., particular sacrifices in the light of the "religious essence" of sacrifice as such, the sacredness of Greek and Roman kings in the light of the "ancient concept" of kingship, etc.

By its very nature comparative research uses generalizations. In Kristensen's historical study such general concepts are considered to give direction to research and to lead to understanding. He compares such "generalizations" in historical study with the function and place of "natural laws" in natural science. In both cases we have to do with fictitious realities and general formulations, as they are assumed in all science.

Phenomenology must group the data or phenomena "...according to characteristics which correspond as far as possible to the essential

63) *Meaning*, p. 1.

64) *Ibid.*, p. 2.

65) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

and typical elements of religion"; its principal task is "... the illustration of man's religious disposition" ⁶⁶). So the debate starts as to what are these essential elements of religion, and which are the data that typically illustrate man's religious disposition. Kristensen's answer is more or less disconcerting: phenomenology can only find out what is held in common, and it is only a philosophical investigation which can show what is really essential ⁶⁷). Consequently, there should be a mutual working relationship between phenomenology and philosophy of religion. Where phenomenology provides the material, "... the principal ideas in Phenomenology are borrowed from Philosophy of Religion. Philosophy must furnish the guiding principle in the research of Phenomenology" ⁶⁸). Besides philosophy using deduction and phenomenology using comparison, history using description is the third province of the science of religion. Phenomenology ⁶⁹) is between history and philosophy, because of the interpenetration of the particular and the universal in phenomenology: which makes it at once systematic History of Religion and applied Philosophy of Religion. However:

"A rational and systematic structure in the science of religion is impossible... The purely logical and rational does not indicate which way we must follow because in Phenomenology we are constantly working with pre-suppositions and anticipations. But that is just what makes our labour important. This study does not take place outside our personality. And the

66) Both quotations *Inleiding*, p. 8.

67) Kristensen does this in an interesting statement on what is "common" in religion. Refuting the idea that that which all religions have in common must be religion's core, he concludes that the common element which could be found finally through comparison, e.g., of the different ideas of deity "... is so vague and fleeting that it gives no guidance in the research of Phenomenology. It can be said just as truly that all religious data, seen more deeply, are held in common. If we but pay attention to their religious significance, they prove not to be alien to us, and certainly not to other believers. Consider, for instance, the many nature gods, such as Osiris, Demeter and Athene. As soon as we learn to understand their essence, the alien element disappears, and they correspond to feelings and insights which are echoed in ourselves. Just for this reason we can understand that which is alien. This is the case with all religious ideas and practices as soon as we comprehend them in their true significance. Seen more deeply, therefore, everything is held in common. Nothing and everything" (*Meaning*, p. 8-9).

68) *Meaning*, p. 9.

69) Kristensen speaks also of "typology" instead of "phenomenology" (*Meaning*, p. 9).

reverse will also prove to be the case: the study exerts an influence on our personality" 70).

"...when religion is subject of our work, we grow religiously. In saying this, we have indicated the highest significance of our scientific task" 70).

It is interesting to see what Kristensen says about what he calls "the essence" of religion, and how it should be determined by philosophy. This should be done by determining the relation of religion as "religious reality" to other spiritual realities, in order to arrive at a definition of what must be called religion's distinctive nature. The basis of this operation is what Kristensen calls a feeling for religion, "...an awareness of what religion is, and this awareness is precisely what Philosophy of Religion attempts to formulate" 71). In other words, the use of the philosopher's own experience is implied. Now the historian's (phenomenologist's) own religious experience is implied in the same sense: in order to know what religion is and in order to understand the religious experience of others. Moreover this experience is indispensable as intuition in the scholar's research. "The scholar must be able to separate the essentially religious from the unessential in all the given historical phenomena which are the object of his research" 72). Here the scholar works on the basis of his innate awareness or "feeling for religion" 73) but he may take advantage of the explicit formulation which the philosopher gives to it. The typical concern of the scholar, however, is neither the essence of religion in general, nor his personal opinions, but the reality of the "belief of the believers". "This reality proves to be self-subsistent and absolute; it is beyond all our rational criticism... The only difficulty for us is to form an accurate conception of this reality and to understand it from within" 74). The scholar should do justice to the values which he studies and which are alien to him; so he should understand the others as autonomous and spiritual individuals. "For the historian only one evaluation is possible: 'the believers were completely right' " 75): only on that condition an under-

70) Both quotations *Meaning*, p. 10.

71) *Meaning*, p. 12.

72) Also *Meaning*, p. 12.

73) This point of departure is reported by all students of Kristensen, e.g. H. Kraemer in his "Introduction": "Kristensen...affirmed...that no serious student of Religion could do so [asking the fundamental question of what religion really is] without being himself profoundly religious" (*Meaning*, p. XXIII).

74) *Meaning*, p. 23.

75) *Ibid.*, p. 14.

standing has taken place. Where most people can "adopt only those ideas which fit the realities of practical life" ⁷⁶), the scholar has the specific task to do justice to the viewpoint of others.

Ancients and moderns. After having given a critical treatment to Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of The Holy* ⁷⁷), Kristensen concludes his "General Introduction" by contrasting what he considers to be two types of civilization in the broadest sense of the word: the ancient and the modern type, represented by Mediterranean Antiquity and by European civilization respectively. The latter is characterized by enlightenment and rationalism, by the subjection of nature and a loss of awareness of the "mystical" background of existence. The Ancients, contrariwise, had a "...vivid consciousness of the cooperation between, indeed a fusion of, the finite and infinite factors in all phenomena connected with the essentials of life" ⁷⁸). They had a sense of the mystery that surrounds us, a feeling of the spontaneous forces and energies whose meaning they understood in the form of myth. The irrational factor, for them, was most important. They had a "religious realism" with their religious sense of nature and their awareness of man's holiness in his divine energies and aspects. Kristensen avows, as mentioned earlier, that the historian has great difficulty in understanding the ancient sense of the mystery of being and of life: he has to make an effort to see any

76) *Ibid.*, p. 15. Compare: "For most people it is a difficult task to do justice to the viewpoint of others when the spiritual issues of life are at stake" (*Ibid.*, p. 15).

77) In this connection Kristensen's distance taken to Otto's study on "The Holy" must be reminded. According to Kristensen, the analysis of the Holy belongs properly to philosophy of religion, and he remarks that on this basis of philosophy of religion — which he compares with Hegel's idea that in the essence the germ of all phenomena is contained, which phenomena in their turn then have to be understood on the basis of the essence — no transition is possible to historical understanding. He moreover reproaches Otto to have forced "an evolutionary pattern of presentation" upon the historical reality. Instead of Otto's philosophical procedure, Kristensen would rather have made an inquiry on how the actual believer conceives the phenomena he calls "holy": he would have taken as his start the viewpoint of the believer rather than the concept "holiness" in its elements or moments. In this way: "We come to know the absolute... in its various expressions..." Kristensen's final judgement on Otto is, that Otto had tried, mistakenly, to join the historian and the philosopher: by taking the attitude of the latter he could not do justice to the "absolute" character of alien religious ideas. The historian, on the contrary, can do justice to it (*Meaning*, pp. 15-18).

78) *Meaning*, p. 20.

mystery at all, and if he succeeds, he still tends to comprehend the many expressions of "the mystery of being" in one total view. For the Ancients, however, such a total view was lacking: each phenomenon of life possessed for them a unique quality of being, whereby each phenomenon was pointing to a new "numen". The differences between these phenomena themselves were irrational to them and not to be comprehended in generalizations. Their polytheism, according to Kristensen, witnesses to an infinite variety in the mystery of being, testifying of different ultimate forces. Put briefly: each religious fact, to them, with all of its particulars, was grounded in a particular religious orientation opposite our own; each one of these facts had an autonomous religious value; they were "religious" phenomena in the sense that they aroused the awareness of spontaneous factors in life which are infinite and absolute, and that through these indeed "religious" phenomena they felt an other world invading the known one. And in this other world was situated the mystery of all of life's foundations. "No particular god confronts the religious community; the phenomena themselves are sacred and divine" ⁷⁹). "The believer really does see these particular phenomena as having a special quality of infinity" ⁸⁰).

We would not hesitate to speak here of a "religious" phenomenology of the religious worldview of Antiquity: "religious" because for Kristensen himself the symbols of Antiquity referred indeed to Divine reality, and because their study provided him, if our guess is right, with an authentic religious experience. Resuming reflectively what, according to Kristensen, the orientation of Antiquity implied, we might say that according to that orientation, nature and human existence could be experienced as divine realities, a world order could be recognized as being a divine reality, a mysterious dual unity of life and death could be perceived as a religious insight, and a harmony of opposites could be seen in the oneness of the totality. Such religious perceptions were expressed symbolically, and one of the contributions of Kristensen to scholarship was the decipherment of such symbols on their religious "ratio".

⁷⁹) *Ibid.*, p 22-23.

⁸⁰) *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Kristensen had a high idea of free scholarship. This meant for him independent and irreducible research in which the particular gifts of the scholar are developed with the aim to arrive at an objective knowledge of a given religious reality: the belief of a community of believers. Religion, for Kristensen, was a sovereign entity, rooted in eternity; belief, to him, oriented towards an immediate divine reality⁸¹). For this scholar, knowledge was essentially sympathetic intuitive understanding according to an enormous factual knowledge, the personal intuition of the researcher, and his use of reason. He demanded from himself and from others a complete mastering of the sources. In Kristensen's study of religion man was central as witness of what was both object and norm of his research: "the belief of the believers". His demand was the listening to the testimony, and the quest of the essential. He wanted to concentrate himself on objective reality and opposed himself against general methods and theories: method, to him, was a purely individual matter of self-education⁸²). As an individualist he was against schools and he was against rationalistic explanations; he cherished his leading ideas and did not enter into discussion⁸³). Consequently, he was not liable to control and verification. He was no systematic thinker, and did not pretend to be so⁸⁴).

As some general features of Kristensen's published phenomenological work may be mentioned: (1) a static image of religion in general and

81) H. Kraemer in his "Introduction", *Meaning*, p. XXII.

82) Although this has led to much admiration among his immediate pupils recognizing the authority of the master, there are also other judgments, e.g.: "It is not, then, surprising that Brede Kristensen should be totally unknown in the Anglo-Saxon world, for he is a typical exponent of a certain type of Teutonic scholarship, the characteristics of which are first the assumption that the author alone has succeeded in feeling himself into his material, secondly an ill-tempered impatience with all other workers in his field, and thirdly a timeless repetitiveness in drumming in the very simple points that others have emphasized less because they seemed so obvious" (*The Times Literary Supplement*, 60th year, No 3088, Friday May, 1961: Religious Books Section, p. II).

83) Kristensen just worked "for himself".

84) H. Kraemer in his "Introduction": "Kristensen, however, was by nature not a philosophical thinker Except for his solid and ever increasing scholarly equipment, his main instrument was the magic prospects of his intuition" (*Meaning* p. XXIII). In Kristensen's communications for the Dutch Academy of Sciences it is striking to find, among other things, much rational argumentation in order to prove the symbolic nature, the "irrational" background of a religious phenomenon.

of the religions studied ⁸⁵); (2) acceptance of a rational (modern) and irrational (Antiquity) type of religious orientation; (3) exclusive concentration on the religions of Antiquity, in particular their chthonic aspects; (4) predilection for symbol-interpretation; (5) predominance of a few leading ideas referring to the mystery religion underneath the different religions of Antiquity; interpretation of nearly all "understood" religious data within this framework⁸⁶); (6) an attempt to grasp spiritual realities with intuition, in a creative activity of the mind; (7) an understanding of the religious sense of man as a sense for self-revealing divine forces, whose reality is the deepest cause and the essence of the religious character of religious phenomena.

When Kristensen's methodological imperative for the student of religion is "to think as the believers think", "to know the belief of the believers" and "to see that the believers were right", this implies that "the belief of the believers" — whatever this may be — is held to be at the same time object and norm of the investigation; moreover it has an absolute quality. In other words, Kristensen understands something quite particular by "understanding": it comes near to the insight which the pupil can receive only from the master. There is a spiritual identification of the student with the believers he studies, a spiritual acceptance of the belief he investigates: and on the basis of this all a faith in the meaningfulness — scholarly or otherwise — of the effort.

In his presentation, Kristensen tends to idealize the religions of Antiquity, the religious orientation of which represents for him nearly "the religion" ⁸⁷). Wisdom and science in Antiquity, according

85) There is hardly any reference to changes in religion or to concrete historical developments, which even are denied ("Egyptian civilization and religion remained about the same for two thousand years and then disappeared. And how many thousand years has the culture of primitive peoples remained at the same level?", *Meaning*, p. 17). With regard to the study of Egyptian religion, Prof. J. Zandee brought to notice that Kristensen laid special stress on the chthonic elements of this religion, with neglect of other elements; he reported that Kristensen's presentations of "history of religions" were always to a large extent "phenomenology of religion", e.g. in the field of egyptology. There is need of a critical study on Kristensen's approach to the religions of Antiquity and of an appreciation of its results in the light of modern scholarship.

86) Many phenomena are selected and interpreted as symbols on the basis of the truth, that divine life and reality is a resurrection from death, and that there is initiation into the mystery of death as source of absolute life.

87) Compare his observation that the religions of Antiquity had values which inspired whole civilizations, followed by: "One would be inclined to say that the

to this scholar, really knew more about the essence of things than present times know, where the deeper sense of reality and its meaning has become lost. The opposition which the scholar puts between Antiquity and Modernity is a symptom of his tendency to see "there" what is not "here". This opposition receives absolute proportions where the religions of Antiquity as a spiritual truth and reality are put into a kind of religious ideal sphere, with traits of the absolute. By studying these religions, according to Kristensen, we can deepen our insight into reality, sharpen our religious sense, and gain access to the essence of things and life. Antiquity, for Kristensen, actually equals Religion. This commitment to the belief of other believers, this interest in mystery religion, fundamental life-awareness and quest for deeper meaning must have been powerful incentives in Kristensen's research work. So he could "discover" the Religion of Antiquity, bring it to life and recognize a religious truth in it because it rang a deep gong in him. In his lectures he could speak of the life view of Antiquity with nostalgia, as a sage but wanting to believe, living in another country than his own, living in another time than was his 88).

G. VAN DER LEEUW (1890-1950)

Although Van der Leeuw 89) gained his chief reputation for his

religious attitude in the different relations of life never made itself as palpable as in those times" (*Inleiding*, p. 112).

88) In his "Introduction", H. Kraemer speaks of Kristensen as moving with heart and mind in the "world of elementary apprehensions", living "...in this grandiose, vanished world of religious apprehension": "...a scholarly equipped mystagogue, who initiated us in a world of unsuspected mystery. He gripped us, because he himself was gripped" (*Meaning*, p. XIX). Kraemer was the successor of Kristensen on the chair of the History of Religions and Phenomenology of Religion in Leyden.

89) Born in 1890, G. van der Leeuw studied theology at the University of Leyden and obtained the Th. D. degree under W. B. Kristensen in 1916. He became a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church and occupied in 1918 the new chair of the History of Religions at the University of Groningen, in the Faculty of Theology. In 1945-46 he was a cabinet minister for Education, Arts and Sciences. Van der Leeuw died in Utrecht in 1950. Within the Dutch Reformed Church, Van der Leeuw identified himself with the so-called "ethical theology", like for instance Chantepie de la Saussaye (who had been his teacher, like Kristensen). Later Van der Leeuw was particularly active in the liturgical movement in the Dutch Reformed Church, and in the attempts to come to a reform of this Church generally. A bibliography of G. van der Leeuw has been published in W. J. Kooiman and J. M. van Veen, ed., *Pro Regno Pro Sanctuario* (offered

phenomenology of religion, he started out as a historian and pursued historical studies during his lifetime. Though he was knowledgeable on many other religions, he studied those of Egypt⁹⁰), Greece and Israel from the sources. The religions of non-literate peoples were also a constant interest to him; not only did he publish various studies on the subject of "primitive religion", but this is also one of the pillars of his general phenomenology of religion, and a corner-stone of his religious anthropology. His views on "power" as a religious category were linked to concepts like *mana*, *orenda* and *wakanda*; the development of "power", "will" and "form" as structural principles is a deepening of the then current theories of dynamism and animism⁹¹).

Verstehen. Since we are concerned here with Van der Leeuw's

on this 60th birthday), pp. 555-638 (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1950). For bibliographical data of and on G. van der Leeuw, see also our *Classical Approaches to the Study of Religion*, II (Religion and Reason, vol. 4). The Hague: Mouton, 1973. There are only three publications available in English: *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (see note 108), *Sacred and Profane Beauty* (see note 129) and the smaller *Virginibus Poerisque* (Amsterdam, 1930). On the other hand, there are many publications in German and some translations into French.

On G. van der Leeuw, see: John B. Carman, "The Theology of a Phenomenologist. An Introduction to the Theology of Gerardus van der Leeuw", *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, XXIX, 3 (April 1965), pp. 13-42; Jan Hermelink, *Verstehen und Bezeugen. Der theologische Ertrag der 'Phänomenologie der Religion' des G. van der Leeuw* ("Beiträge zur evangelischen Theologie", Band 30). München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1960; Eva Hirschmann, "In memoriam Gerardus van der Leeuw, 18 mars 1890-18 novembre 1950", *Le monde non-chrétien*, XVII (janvier-mars 1951), pp. 27-37. See especially by G. van der Leeuw himself the autobiographical "Confession scientifique. Faite à l'Université Masaryk de Brno le lundi 18 novembre 1946", *Numen*, I 1 (January 1954), pp. 8-15. For Van der Leeuw's *verstehen*, as opposed to *erklären*, see in Dutch with English summary: F. Sierksma, *Phaenomenologie der religie en complexe psychologie* (the same as *Freud, Jung en de religie*). Assen: Van Gorcum, 1951.

There is a collection of publications, papers, and letters of G. van der Leeuw in the university library in Groningen.

90) See M. S. H. G. Heerma van Voss, "Nécrologie G. van der Leeuw. Bibliographie égyptologique", *Chronique d'Égypte*, XXVII, no. 53 (janvier 1952), pp. 140-141. Comp. by the same, "Lijst der geschriften van Prof. Dr. G. van der Leeuw betreffende het oude Voor-Azië en Egypte" (List of publications by Prof. Dr. G. van der Leeuw concerning the Ancient Near East and Egypt), *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux*, XII (1951-52), pp. 126-129.

91) There is a singular use made of such theories by Van der Leeuw. Since he rejects on principle any theory as a system of explanation, he cannot "apply" them: he rather transforms basic concepts of theories into "structural principles" for his phenomenology. In this sense one could speak of a "deepening" of an existing theory by Van der Leeuw.

phenomenological work, it will be necessary to go somewhat deeper into his methodology as he developed it. Van der Leeuw aimed at a study of religion primarily concerned with "understanding", and this understanding of religion was for Van der Leeuw part of a general attitude of understanding towards reality. The technical term for this understanding in Van der Leeuw's phenomenology is *verstehen*⁹²). How did Van der Leeuw reflect upon this *verstehen*?

In an article of 1926, "Ueber einige neuere Ergebnisse der psychologischen Forschung und ihre Anwendung auf die Geschichte, insonderheit die Religionsgeschichte"⁹³) ("On some recent achievements of psychological research and their application to history, in particular the history of religion"), Van der Leeuw starts by relativizing the principle of explanation in scholarly research. Since any explanation tends to give absolute validity to one single system of interpretation, it implies a violation of reality by forcing it in a methodical strait-jacket of one single principle and method. Rather than explanation, understanding should be the aim of the study of religion. In the same way as this happened in psychology, in historical research too a movement into this direction should take place, since both disciplines are concerned with the study of persons, in which study the "subjectivity" of the researcher is not only an unavoidable but also an indispensable datum. In order to become understood, the object should be allowed to affect the researcher as a whole, and this should be done methodically. Van der Leeuw accounts then for some achievements reached in this way in psychology, in the work of Karl Jaspers, Eduard Spranger and Ludwig Binswanger⁹⁴). The student has to

92) Since Van der Leeuw in his phenomenological work uses a particular way and technique of "understanding", the technical term for which is the German *verstehen* as used by Van der Leeuw himself, we prefer to keep to the German wording.

93) *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*, II, 1 (1926), pp. 1-43.

94) Karl Jaspers, *Allgemeine Psychopathologie*. Berlin: J. Springer, 1913, 1920² (revised), 1922³ (revised; used by G. van der Leeuw). Eduard Spranger, *Psychologie des Jugendalters*. Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1924, 1925⁵; *Lebensformen*, Halle: Niemeyer, 1914, 1921² (revised with subtitle: *Geisteswissenschaftliche Psychologie und Ethik der Persönlichkeit*), 1927⁶; "Die Frage nach der Einheit der Psychologie", *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XXIV (1926) pp. 172-199; "Verstehen und Erklären. Thesen", *Proceedings and Papers of the VIIIth International Congress of Psychology held at Groningen from 6 to 11 Sept. 1926* (Groningen: Noordhoff, 1927), pp. 147-158.

Ludwig Binswanger, *Einführung in die Probleme der allgemeinen Psychologie*,

come to empathy (*Einfühlung*), making an effort to let his object be "object" as little as possible and to let it pass into the subject. That is to say, he has to transpose ("*ver-stehen*") himself into his object and to re-experience it. As a result he reaches a reality which is not the spatial-temporal one, but which is rather a psychological reality: the stream of consciousness which is to be understood from within. Van der Leeuw equates this with the "life-stream" and compares the phenomenological analyst with a trained swimmer who is familiar with such a stream: he takes the psychological phenomena as they present themselves, he does not comprehend their factual existence but contemplates their essence, and he analyzes them in an intuitive and not in a rational manner. He is not so much concerned with the empirically comprehensible events, as with those "events" that are "directly" intelligible in their "general" being; such "events" are "psychological". On the side of the phenomenologist, there should be, first, spontaneously warm, self-denying devotion to the object, and then "intuitive abstraction" or *epoché*. In this way the "essence" of the object is grasped⁹⁵). Interestingly enough, there is no fundamental difference between the observation of the ego of oneself and that of someone else: the "contents" of consciousness being the same, it is only the "act" of observation which makes the difference. There is no basic difference in the experience of something by one person or by another.

Next, the search is for "structural relations" (*verständliche Zusammenhänge*), i.e. the meaningful whole of the contiguous empirical situation and of the phenomenologically cleared essences. Such structural relations are established on the basis of "evidence" as a criterion.

Berlin: J. Springer, 1922; "Verstehen und Erklären in der Psychologie", *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie*, CVII (1927), pp. 655-683.

There are also many references to Paul Hofmann, *Das religiöse Erlebnis. Seine Struktur, seine Typen und sein Wahrheitsanspruch*, and *Allgemeinwissenschaft und Geisteswissenschaft*. Both: Charlottenburg: Pan-Verlag, 1925.

95) By phenomenological analysis "...the object is not seized and dissected into its elements, but viewed in its essence so that we may discern what is part of its essence and what is not... When in this way the object has revealed itself in its uniqueness, it must further be established how the elements, which together make it up, are interrelated" ("Strukturpsychologie und Theologie", *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, N.F. IX (1928), p. 322). "The criterion in all cases is the evidence (*Evidenz*) through which it is not so much we who discover the object, but the object that manifests itself to us" (*idem*. p. 322).

This presupposes an intuitive insight into what is essential, typical, meaningful, and such an insight is near to artistic talent.

As a matter of fact, the process of *verstehen* implies two different kinds of understanding which are brought together: a "static-phenomenological" and a "genetic-structural" understanding. The first visualizes the objects as they are as separate elements, and arrives at their phenomenologically clarified essences. The second sees them as they follow up each other, thus visualizing the structural connections (*verständliche Beziehungen*) between these elements. By the "genetic-structural" understanding the individual images, as yielded by the "static-phenomenological" abstraction, are seen as a living unity and experienced as such. When the process of *verstehen* is complete, the static essences become structural relations, and these are seen as "ideal types". Such "ideal types" are a "reflection" of phenomena in the mind; they are images which combine certain processes and relations into a unified whole, which is at once "experienced" and "understood".

Meaning and reality. It is important to realize, that for Van der Leeuw this way of understanding cannot claim to represent reality: it only represents a "unified living meaningfulness" (*eine einheitliche lebendige Sinnbezogenheit*). It is this meaningfulness which is experienced and understood, and, characteristically enough, it has as such a normative nature. The stress on the "normative" character of the "ideal types" is typical for Van der Leeuw's idea of understanding: "ideal types" are structural relations combined into an experience that stands as normative against "reality" and that makes this reality "understandable" ⁹⁶). Besides the common human "empirical" experience, Van der Leeuw claims for the phenomenologist a second, "constructing" experience ⁹⁷); just like the artist, the phenomenologist

96) If, according to Van der Leeuw, *verstehen* is normative, it is this only in an ideal-typical sense: an ideal, meaningful, understandable "stream" (*Verlauf*) is placed underneath the unknown primal experience (*Urerlebnis*). This "primal experience" as subject of investigation cannot be reached by a simple re-experiencing, but only by "understanding" ("Strukturpsychologie und Theologie", pp. 325 and 334).

97) "By 'experience' (*Erlebnis*) is implied an actually subsisting life which, with respect to its meaning, constitutes a unity" (*Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, p. 671). Van der Leeuw's concern is with what becomes palpable of this "life" in the experience. On the basis of a religious experience, e.g., the

has a double register of experiencing reality. The latter's specific task is to make life understandable by means of a "constructing" experience of a normative character. By means of such an experience the "structure" of a person or of an event becomes evident ⁹⁸). And in the reverse way, a structure as a "unity of meaning" is not intellectually constructed, but it is an "experienced construction" ⁹⁹). To be capable of such experiencing demands a psychological self-education on the part of the phenomenologist.

Phenomenological theology. In an article which appeared two years later and which was meant for theological readers ¹⁰⁰), Van der Leeuw elaborates further on his "psychological method", which he calls nevertheless "phenomenological" in the wider sense that this word has in the work of Paul Hofmann and Karl Jaspers. He admits that it would be also possible to speak of "psychology" instead of "phenomenology" of religion ¹⁰¹). The method is "...an attempt to re-experience a certain entity as such, to transpose oneself into an object as an organic whole" ¹⁰²). In this method the focus of attention has shifted from

world can become a "manifestation". Consequently, Van der Leeuw's phenomenology is directed towards a particular kind of experience; this experience has a spiritual quality and is an "experience of understanding" whereby it gives access to the domain of primal experience. This specific experience designates always a structure, i.e. things are understood in a particular meaningful connection (*Sinnzusammenhang*), and it is directed towards something (*gegenständlich gerichtet*). The distinction between the primal experience (*Urerlebnis*) which is in itself inaccessible and the constructing experience which makes the primal experience and the reality at least "understandable" by imposing a design on — i.e. experiencing a structure in — it, is basic to Van der Leeuw's phenomenological work. It results in a widening of the "self" of the phenomenologist.

98) It manifests itself as an ideal-typical entity: which is not a "fact" but a "meaning", i.e. a norm imposed on reality, which makes this reality — which is in itself unknowable and unintelligible — "understandable".

99) The "experienced construction" or "constructing experience" is autonomous and constitutes itself on account of "signs" indicating a meaningful whole.

100) "Strukturpsychologie und Theologie", *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, N.F. IX (1928), pp. 321-349.

101) "Instead of speaking of "study of religion" (*Religionswissenschaft*) and of phenomenological theology, one could also continue to speak of psychology of religion if it only would be sure, that this psychology of religion has nothing to do and can have nothing to do with what is presented to us as psychology of religion from America or elsewhere. In other words, our concern is with psychology of structure (*Strukturpsychologie*) in the sense of Dilthey" ("Strukturpsychologie", p. 324-325).

102) "Strukturpsychologie", p. 322.

historical and metaphysical interests, which aim at discovering "reality" or "truth", to *verstehen*. To put it sharply, perhaps too sharply: the goal of knowledge is replaced by the goal of understanding, i.e. a knowing "...directed by the norm of the meaning that asserts itself" ¹⁰³). Van der Leeuw alludes here to a metaphysic which is implicit in *verstehen* in general, but specifically of *verstehen* of religious experience. In all understanding somehow an activity of what is understood is palpable, a kind of revelation of meaning. In the religious experience that which is understood reveals itself as the last ground of understanding itself. Consequently, the last term of *verstehen* is not "understanding" but "being understood": *verstehen* itself is, in the last analysis, of a religious nature.

In this article, Van der Leeuw launches his project of a "phenomenological theology", which he frankly equates with *Religionswissenschaft*. Such a theology would be concerned not with the factual events nor with the ultimate content of religious data, but with their "meaning in the experience of the believers" ¹⁰⁴) or with something as "a matter-to-be-understood" (*Verständlichkeit*). Van der Leeuw would like to see such a phenomenological theology as an intermediary stage between "historical" and "systematic" theology. It would have a broader approach than that of literary, historical or psychological research; it would be a systematic but not a theoretical or dogmatic discipline; finally it would move neither in the sphere of empirical nor that of ultimate realities, but only in the sphere of the "meaning" of the religious phenomena that are to be understood. The discipline deals with the uniqueness, the singular being and the genuineness of a religious phenomenon, and it gives it a place within a total structure. It brackets the phenomenon, however, with regard to the last values; renouncing the empirical-historical or the metaphysical-theological problem of truth, it limits itself to the problem of "meaning" or "significance". It functions, however, between historical and metaphysical questions, leading from the former to the latter. In this way phenomenology is theologically relevant because it makes theological doctrines "understood" as true. It is evident that Van der Leeuw puts here the phenomenological enterprise into service of theology.

Structure and meaning. In a study published in 1935, *Inleiding tot*

¹⁰³) *Ibid.*, p. 323.

¹⁰⁴) "...ihren Sinn im Erleben der gläubigen Gemeinde", *Ibid.*, p. 324.

de theologie (Introduction to Theology), Van der Leeuw goes somewhat deeper into the matter of *verstehen*, in connection with the work of Wilhelm Dilthey, Eduard Spranger and Martin Heidegger ¹⁰⁵). Real understanding is only possible in the framework of "all-embracing ideal structures" (*übergreifende Geistesstrukturen*). Each individual structure is then understood within such ideal connections of the "objective mind" (*objektiver Geist*) in the sense of Dilthey; such connections are more than individual. On the other hand, real understanding is only possible on the common basis of a "circle of communication" (*Sphäre von Gemeinsamkeit*) in the sense of Dilthey; this is the "circle of understandability" (*verstaanbaarheidskring*) outside of which no understanding is possible. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, understanding applies to the entire person: not only a free consciousness, but the whole existence of the subject is involved and active in the act of understanding. In the last resort, "someone's understanding is identical with someone's being within the world", and a structure is an "explicitated meaning of such being within the world" ¹⁰⁶). When "meaning" is the gate of access to the reality of primal experience through a constructed experience, and consequently the entrance gate to the world, "structure" is the "imprint" (*geprägte Form*) on reality, which makes this reality understandable to us. For Van der Leeuw such a structure constitutes the essence of the phenomena ¹⁰⁷). It is an "organic" whole in which each part performs a function which is meaningful to the whole, whereby the composition and performance of each part are conditioned by the whole, and thus intelligible only on the basis of the whole. A structure can be discerned by the particular

105) *Inleiding tot de theologie*. Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1948², pp. 59-79. We use here especially what is written on pp. 66-68. Beyond the four contemporaries mentioned in note 6, is Wilhelm Dilthey at the background of Van der Leeuw's attempt to base the study of religion on *verstehen*. It would require a study in itself to see the place of Van der Leeuw within the whole movement of *verstehen* in thought and scholarship, in the decades before World War II. Van der Leeuw mentions Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* incidentally, but it is doubtful if he read it completely. There is reason too, to suppose that Van der Leeuw knew Husserl mainly from secondary sources. Such a picking of cultural flowers is hardly imaginable in present-day scholarship, but was a tradition in European humanities.

106) *Inleiding*, p. 68.

107) In terms of meaning, a structure is an "interconnection of meaning" (*Religion in Essence and Manifestations*, p. 673). In terms of reality and meaning, a structure is "reality significantly organized" (*ibidem*, p. 672).

meaning which is understood by it in and through reality. Characteristically enough, Van der Leeuw considers that this "meaning" finds itself between object and subject, that it is like a network which the human mind casts over reality in order to understand it. The methodological consequence of this view is, that there are as many scholarly approaches as there are meanings attached to a certain segment of reality. Van der Leeuw distinguishes then three "spheres" in the whole of the cognitive methods: (1) that of "comprehending" (*erfassend*) research; (2) that of "understanding" (*verstehend*) research; (3) that of research related to an "ultimate meaning", which, however, never can be grasped definitely by man. All scholarly disciplines have their share in each of these three spheres, be it in different ways and in different degrees.

The "Epilegomena". In the well-known "Epilegomena" of *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* ¹⁰⁸) a reflective account is given by the author of his way of *verstehen* of religion. We may confine ourselves to remarking some points which have particular significance after the foregoing. First, we resume some points related to *verstehen* generally, which furnish so to say a blueprint of Van der Leeuw's *mind in process of verstehen*:

- (1) Subject of investigation is the "phenomenon", simply defined as "what appears". The fact of appearance of something constitutes its being "phenomenon"; the entire essence of the phenomenon is given in "its appearance to someone". Van der Leeuw does not analyze what kind of mind perceives the phenomenon, nor under which conditions this happens.

¹⁰⁸) This is the English translation of *Phänomenologie der Religion*, Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1933, 1956² (posthumously revised and enlarged on the basis of the French edition), 1970³.

English translation by J. E. Turner: *Religion in Essence and Manifestation. A Study in Phenomenology*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1938. Of this English translation a pocket edition appeared in 1963 in two volumes, with "Appendices" incorporating the additions of the second German edition, made by Hans H. Penner (Harper Torchbooks TB 100 and 101. New York and Evanston: Harper & Row, 1963). A French translation was made by Jacques Marty, incorporating additions made by Van der Leeuw to the German edition of 1933. This translation and edition was approved of by Van der Leeuw in his "Avant-propos de l'édition française": *La religion dans son essence et ses manifestations. Phénoménologie de la religion*. Paris: Payot, 1948, 1970².

- (2) Phenomenology arises as soon as the "someone" starts talking about what "appears" and starts discussing it. After experiencing it, one may come to an understanding and a testimony of it: both together constitute "phenomenology" in the full sense of the word. "Phenomenology is the systematic discussion of what appears" ¹⁰⁹).
- (3) A presupposition of phenomenology is that the immediate, the primal experience, is never given once it has passed. Since an immediate access to one's own life or to life itself is impossible, one must content oneself with a "reconstruction" of the primal experience.
- (4) "Structure" is reality meaningfully organized. The meaning belongs in part to reality itself and in part to the someone who tries to understand it. "Meaning" is therefore an inner connection between understanding (by the subject) and intelligibility or understandability (of the object).
- (5) Real understanding "dawns upon us". It gives access to the reality of primal experience, the entrance gate of which is "meaning". An individual experience of understanding may be called an "experiential unity".
- (6) *Verstehen* extends over several "experiential unities" simultaneously. Various such individual experiences of understanding

Van der Leeuw wrote also a smaller phenomenology of religion: *Inleiding tot de godsdienstgeschiedenis* (Introduction to the history of religion). Haarlem: Erven Bohn, 1924. He published a second, completely revised and actually new edition in 1948 under the title of: *Inleiding tot de phaenomenologie van den godsdienst* (Introduction to phenomenology of religion). Haarlem: Erven Bohn, 1948. A German translation of the first edition appeared under the title of: *Einführung in die Phänomenologie der Religion*, München, 1925; a German translation of the second Dutch edition was made and edited posthumously by H. C. Piper and appeared under the same title in München, 1961.

Although Van der Leeuw's *Phänomenologie der Religion* has been admired in many quarters, there has been criticism too. So most recently: "...more important is it to know how the phenomenologists applied their method. The reply to this question is necessarily brief: they fall short of their own standards. There is hardly a more disappointing book than G. van der Leeuw's "Phänomenologie der Religion" (1933) ... Throughout the real phenomenon escapes his observation. That real phenomenon is religion, i.e. a religion, the religion of a people or a group, observed and described in its totality" (J. van Baal, *Symbols for Communication. An introduction to the anthropological study of religion*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1971, p. 90).

¹⁰⁹) *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, p. 683.

become then coordinated within the experience of some wider connection or ideal structure.

- (7) Individual experiences are linked together in such wider connections by means of "ideal types", the instruments of *verstehen*. For Van der Leeuw, the "wider connections", actually, are types. The phenomenon, once it has appeared, continues to subsist as an image: this image "deepens" itself and "grows" through further similar phenomena, i.e. phenomena of the same type. Between these similar phenomena there are "structural connections" and they constitute an "ideal type".
- (8) Reflecting on his experience of such "ideal types", Van der Leeuw observes that they have no reality in place and time, but that they have another sort of "reality". That is to say, they possess their own "life", their own "meaning" and their own "law". And, what is most important, they "appear" in their turn as ideal types, and the individual phenomena "appear" in connection with these ideal types.

We would like to summarize in the same way the so-called "*stages*" of *phenomenological treatment*, as described by Van der Leeuw. They actually do not follow chronologically one upon the other:

- (1) Classification in the assignment of names to the phenomena that have become manifest and have appeared;
- (2) Sympathetic experience of the appearing phenomenon as its interpolation in one's own life ¹¹⁰);
- (3) Bracketing of the empirical and ultimate reality and truth of the phenomenon as *epoche* or restraint of judgment ¹¹¹);

110) It is interesting to note that Van der Leeuw does not speak here of "empathy". Point of departure is: "'Reality' is always *my* reality, history *my* history" (p. 674). So the "interpolation" of the phenomenon in one's own life is only an intensification of what is "natural". Next, distance is taken in the *epoche*. There is an evident tension between "participation" and "distance", which Van der Leeuw used not only as a methodological tool, but which he considered to be an anthropological structure (as "primitive" over and against "modern" mentality).

111) Van der Leeuw uses the term *epoche* in different senses, which are only remotely related to the meaning it has in Husserl's work. Generally speaking, *epoche* is for Van der Leeuw the "attitude of understanding". It indicates the relationship of *verstehen* between subject and object. It implies a distance between both which is of a particular kind: guaranteeing the autonomy of what

- (4) Discernment of ideal types comprehending phenomena with structural relations as a clarification of what has been observed. Arrangement of ideal typical interrelations within some wider whole of meaning;
- (5) Hermeneutics of the "logos" or "ratio" of what is manifested in an often intangible experience, or expressed in an "appearance" or utterance. By *verstehen* chaotic and obstinate reality can be seen as a manifestation or revelation; an empirical, ontological or metaphysical fact can be seen as a "datum"; an object can be seen as living speech, and rigidity can be seen as an expression;
- (6) Empirical research in order to control and correct what has been understood phenomenologically;
- (7) Testimony of what has been manifested and then understood ¹¹²).

Van der Leeuw states here explicitly that the goal of *verstehen* is pure objectivity, that is to say to have access to the facts themselves. In the phenomenological experience of such facts he searches purely objective meaning, in order that all violence to the facts — be it empirical, logical or metaphysical — may be excluded ¹¹³).

Verstehen of religion. Given this idea of *verstehen*, how does Van der Leeuw conceive of the *verstehen* of religion? Throughout his work, he looks at religion in two different ways: as experience and as

is understood, allowing to see the object both in its internal structure and within broader connections, preventing the subject to fall into the traps of empiricism and metaphysics. There are several other connotations of the *epoche* in Van der Leeuw's work.

¹¹²) Perhaps the "testimony" was the natural effect of the experience of *verstehen*. J. Hermelink contends in his *Verstehen und Bezeugen* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1960) that it was the ultimate aim of *verstehen* for Van der Leeuw, and that it contains the whole theological view behind Van der Leeuw's phenomenology. Van der Leeuw submits himself that speech has to put in words all that has manifested itself. "Speech" had for him a metaphysical and theological quality.

¹¹³) In his "Confession scientifique" of 1946 (published in *Numen*, I, 1, January 1954, pp. 8-15) Van der Leeuw resumes the phenomenological method as classification, selection and penetration by means of introspection; he mentions that it has found application in history, theology, art, etc. The proper object and goals of phenomenology — being the essence of religious phenomena — is then defined significantly as the "unity of life and what is lived" ("cet Etre qui n'est ni l'expérience comme telle ni le fait-en-soi, mais l'unité indissoluble des deux, de la vie et du vécu"). ("Confession scientifique", p. 12).

revelation. The relation between these two determines also the relation between phenomenology and theology ¹¹⁴):

- (1) Religion can be observed as an intelligible experience, which is a human phenomenon and can be studied as such. So we can come to an understanding of religion from the human point of view ¹¹⁵).
- (2) Religion can be considered to be incomprehensible revelation, which revelation is not a phenomenon and cannot be studied; the essence of religion can only be grasped from God's point of view, and cannot be known. However, though revelation itself is not a phenomenon, man's assertion about what has been revealed to him is a phenomenon and can be studied.

According to Van der Leeuw, religion as experience, i.e. "ultimate experience", can be understood only because the *verstehen* itself, if pursued to the end, is ultimately religious. Consequently, both in the "experience of being understood" and in the "understanding experience" — which in their contents are one, according to Van der Leeuw — there is some "other" reality: and this "other" reality is the same

¹¹⁴) Theology and phenomenology, for Van der Leeuw, are two roads which are both mandatory for the theologian: "For the theologian, who exists between the two realities of Revelation and world, there open two roads which lead him to the goal and which he travels all through his life: the road from Revelation to the world, thus the road going down; and the road from the world to Revelation, going up. These two ways are not one way which is traversed in different directions. There are two of them, and both are equally necessary and lead to the goal, where God and Divine matters can be discussed. The two ways neither cross nor run parallel...

The *first road* is the properly theological one... Only from the event of Revelation can we direct ourselves to the happenings of the world...

The *second road* we call that of the science of religion, that is, human knowledge concerning religion..." [First published in 1941, reprinted as "De twee wegen der Theologie" (The two roads of Theology) in the second edition of *Inleiding tot de Theologie*, 1948², pp. 163-175. The quoted passages are on pp. 163-165. The translation is by John B. Carman, in *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, XXIX, 3 (April 1965), pp. 25-26, as part of his article "The Theology of a Phenomenologist. An Introduction to the Theology of Gerardus van der Leeuw", pp. 13-42].

¹¹⁵) In Van der Leeuw's view, religion is one of the consequences of the fact that man does not accept life as given to him: he seeks "power" in life, something that is superior. In this search, man's life extends itself, and "religion is the extension of life to its uttermost limit" (*Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, p. 679). Another consequence of man's refusal to accept the given life is his endeavor to find "meaning" in life and to arrange this into a significant whole. So he makes culture and "seeks ever further for constantly deeper and wider meaning" (*Ibidem*, p. 679).

for both. In the case of the religious experience this is the ground of revelation; in the case of the experience of *verstehen* this is the ground of understanding. "For all understanding that extends 'to the ground' ceases to be understanding before it reaches the ground, and recognizes itself as a 'becoming understood'. In other terms: all understanding, irrespective of whatever object it refers to, is ultimately religious: all significance sooner or later leads to ultimate significance" ¹¹⁶). It is indeed characteristic for Van der Leeuw that, given the fact that the norm of understanding is "evidence" (*Evidenz*), this evidence, when it concerns religious data, is seen by him as a "preparedness for revelation" ¹¹⁷). One cannot but conclude that, according to this scholar, the student of religion would receive some kind of divine revelation, just as there had been some revelation to the authors of the phenomena studied.

Discussion of Van der Leeuw's verstehen. There is something sacred around the notion of *verstehen* as Van der Leeuw uses it, and which is the very centre of his phenomenological work. It posits an access to the realm of primal experience, and it has ultimately a religious character. To strive after *verstehen* is a religious goal. With this *verstehen* he created a discipline and he developed a specific methodology for it.

A weakness in Van der Leeuw's thought on *verstehen* is that he does not distinguish between the experience which has to be understood and the experience which is inherent in the act of understanding. In the same way he does not distinguish between the significance of a phenomenon for the believers concerned and the meaning which it acquires for the understanding scholar. Another weakness is that Van der Leeuw's phenomenology presupposes an objective mind, i.e. an objectively structured whole of objective meanings to which the scholar ascends through his self-induced experiences of structures and ideal types. It would seem that the objectivity of the meanings in Van der Leeuw's phenomenology was not put in doubt by him, because of the religious character of *verstehen*: on one hand it is the quest of an ultimate, a "last meaning"; on the other hand there is some divine revelation in it when it extends "to the ground", as there is some

116) *Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, p. 684.

117) *Ibidem*, p. 685; this is quoted from E. Przywara.

divine revelation in religious experience. The act of *verstehen* is founded religiously, and the very reversal from "understanding" to "being understood", which is so characteristic for Van der Leeuw, may be seen as a dialectic between subject and object of *verstehen*, a dialectic which takes place in a religious dimension. Would it be too much to say that Van der Leeuw brought a "natural theology" within the act of *verstehen* itself? It is probably also this religious character of *verstehen* — its becoming nearly a cult of the experienced phenomena, a Religion of the Phenomenon — which makes that the most critical question of the reality of subject and object is never put by Van der Leeuw, except in religious terms. In this phenomenology all attention is given to the Phenomenon, which is separated from its context, introduced into the mental universe of the phenomenologist, and made a building stone in the construction of the ideal types. If positivism tends to reduce reality to isolated facts and to separate subject and object rigorously, Van der Leeuw's phenomenology tends to reduce reality to phenomena of the mind clustered to ideal types, and to stop questioning subject and object at all in favor of religious meanings taken as absolutes in themselves.

It is significant, indeed, that in his phenomenology of religion Van der Leeuw is mainly concerned with the understanding of isolated phenomena, impressions of consciousness or units of meaning, which are methodically experienced in a particular way. There is an obvious pre-selection of the phenomena which are recognized to be meaningful, and there is an obvious isolation of their religious meaning from their social, functional, material etc. significance. This type of understanding does not take place through an interrogation of the phenomena: they are simply visualized in structures and stored in ideal types. "Understanding" for Van der Leeuw would be, in the last analysis, the pursuit of the psychological experience of meaning and the comprehending of the contents of experience in a realm of ideal typical structures.

Van der Leeuw's phenomenology of religion confronts the reader actually with the problem of meaning. For this scholar, "meaning" was a third term between objective facticity and subjective evaluation: and this notion of "meaning" has determined his treatment of the significance of religious phenomena. By making his interpretations not only in theology but also in phenomenology in view of the "last"

meaning, he arrives at a frank absolutization of meaning¹¹⁸): the significance of the phenomena is cut from the people for whom it is or was valid, and there is a neglect of the role of human intersubjectivity in any understanding. The experience of understanding has become a lonely though religious experience, the results of which can be testified but hardly be discussed.

Basic assumptions. Given the fundamental problems which are connected with the immense *oeuvre* of Van der Leeuw, it is necessary to say something about the presuppositions and norms which underlie his phenomenological work. An analysis of them would show the main reasons why this scholar had an open mind for the particular phenomena he studied, and why he understood them in the particular way he did. What can be said about what made Van der Leeuw select and interpret the phenomena in his own way?

Theology. In his inaugural address *Plaats en taak van de godsdienstgeschiedenis in de theologische wetenschap* (Place and Task of the History of Religion in Theology) of 1918, the basis of the later work is outlined. Object of investigation of the history of religion is the one phenomenon of religion. Religion is a reality apart which has to do with God — it also has a certain unity which has to do with both God and man. This unity is in the history of religion — rather than religions — more or less accepted as self-evident, but in the phenomenology of religion the whole effort is directed towards this unity. Though the religions are historically different, they are psychologically a unity: in all religion there is a common ground, and all religion refers to one and the same activity of the human mind. "A phenomenological study is directed towards understanding the phenomenon of religion as such. It includes in principle all that presents itself as being religious, compares it and searches for affinity 'in the psychological, not in the historical sense' ¹¹⁹). Since the nature of the object is the psychological ground of the religious, the method has to be psychological in order to do justice to its object (the religious) and reach its psychological ground. In order to achieve this, the religious phenomena must be understood 'out of themselves', and for this the

¹¹⁸) This "phenomenological metaphysics of meaning" is less pronounced in his publications after 1945.

¹¹⁹) *Plaats en taak van de godsdienstgeschiedenis in de theologische wetenschap* (Groningen-Den Haag: J. B. Wolters, 1918), p. 7.

investigator needs, besides knowledge of the language and history, intuition". Consequently, the unity of religion is supposed to be situated in a "psychological ground"; and when Van der Leeuw says that he works "psychologically" he means: to discover affinities in a "psychological" sense, and to penetrate into the "psychological" ground of religion ¹²⁰).

Where history establishes facts, phenomenology wants to understand their significance or meaning; both studies are complementary to each other. Phenomenology is thereby the art of seeing connections, of understanding. This understanding proceeds by way of extension, starting with what has most affinity, it goes to what is further away and foreign. This holds true also for the understanding of religion: the starting point is what is known to be religious — one's own religion —, and the attempt is made to arrive via what is related to this to what is further away and foreign: and so to arrive at a wider and wider understanding of religion. In view of this starting point Van der Leeuw puts as a norm for the person of the scholar: "It must be demanded from the scholar in the field of religion that he be religious himself" ¹²¹). Van der Leeuw denies in the field of religious studies the possibility to be without presuppositions and to have an absolute objectivity: a standpoint is unavoidable and students in this field should be lucid about it. They should have clarified their presuppositions, know where they stand and from what angle they look at religion.

Van der Leeuw pleads then to put the study of religion within the whole of the theological disciplines. He proclaims the Christian faith to be normative for his study of religion. However — and this is important to note — "the Christian faith" is not a particular doctrine or dogma or personal faith: it is to be established by theology through the description of the "pious consciousness", i.e. the faith of the Christian community in the past and at present, on the basis of a participation in this faith. "Theology" is for Van der Leeuw a descriptive discipline, and the theologian does in principle with Christianity what the phenomenologist does with religion as such. Van der Leeuw pleads then for a study of religion which is relevant for practice and which has an immediate connection with life. Since evaluations are

¹²⁰) *Ibidem*, p. 7.

¹²¹) *Ibidem*, p. 14.

necessary, the historian cannot work without philosophical or theological reflection: there should be a combination of historical and systematic work. For its selection and classification of phenomena, phenomenology must receive from theology the norm of "the faith of the Christian community" ¹²²). The result will be: (1) that the proper character both of Christianity and of other religions will be made clearer; (2) that there will be no longer a systematic separation made between Christian and non-Christian phenomena; (3) that a knowledge will be pursued both of what is humanly general and of what is specific to Christianity, so that the unique place of Christianity will be made clear ¹²³) and so that Christianity can become conscious of itself as a "positive religion"; (4) that there will be an open eye for all that in religion has to do with human life.

In commenting on this inaugural address one might say that the old problem of the relation between faith and knowledge is put here in terms of the relation between the personal Christian faith and the desire to understand religion. Just as everything which is religious finally finds its ground in God, so all understanding of what is religious finally goes back to faith in God. Understanding presupposes faith. As far as we can see, Van der Leeuw never departed from this basis in his later phenomenological and theological work, and he applied it in his anthropology and his aesthetics as well. However, his very initial position would induce an interesting dialectic between his theological (and liturgical) and his anthropological (and phenomenological) thought, converging in the problem of the relation of God and man. Van der Leeuw's theological and anthropological thought is to be seen as both a deepening of and an answer to his phenomenological work ¹²⁴).

A concrete application of his view on the theological disciplines is

¹²²) *Ibidem*, p. 18.

¹²³) Phenomenology of religion, in Van der Leeuw's wording, has here the old vocation of the *Theologia Naturalis*. In various respects, phenomenology of religion functions for Van der Leeuw indeed as a natural theology.

¹²⁴) In practice his phenomenology has an anthropological and theological starting point. In the "Confession scientifique" of 1946, Van der Leeuw calls phenomenology of religion an autonomous discipline with its own field, hinting at philosophical or religious anthropology. "The study of religious phenomena leads unavoidably to the study of religious man. And religious man is not a man apart, but simply man seen in the religious perspective" (*Numen*, I, 1, p. 12).

the book *Sacramentstheologie* (Theology of Sacraments) of 1949, thirty years later. Our interest here is in the second part of the book, which offers a phenomenological treatment whereby "historical factuality" (treated in Part One) and the "factuality of faith" (treated in Part Three) are bracketed in order to view sacrament as it appears in the world, as a phenomenon. The author is concerned here with "... what the place of sacraments is in the world, that is to say, in the material world and in the world of human intentions" ¹²⁵). *The function of phenomenology is to make valid the earthly reality of the sacraments.*

In his phenomenological analysis Van der Leeuw comes here to an important precision of his categories of analysis:

A) Religious phenomena receive their *name* through the *ideal types* to which they belong and which constitute their form;

B) Religious phenomena receive their *contents* through certain fundamental religious *mental structures* which are of a philosophical anthropological nature. Van der Leeuw distinguishes, e.g., the "magic", the "mystical pantheistic", the "psychological interiorized", the "mystical-ecstatic" and the "faith" structures. *This later amplification and precision of the formal categories of the "ideal types" with these material categories of the "mental structures" ¹²⁶) must be taken into account in any definite judgment upon Van der Leeuw's phenomenological work.* It allows to treat religious phenomena not only according to the ideal type to which they belong, but also according to different religious outlooks in which they occur.

Anthropology. Van der Leeuw's interest in non-literate peoples — or rather their mentality ¹²⁷) — and their religion is in close connection with his general phenomenology of religion and its resulting in

¹²⁵) *Sacramentstheologie* (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1949), p. 133. A German translation of this book was made by Eva Schwarz: *Sakramentales Denken. Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der ausserchristlichen und christlichen Sakramente*, with a preface by Wilhelm Stählin. Kassel: Joh. Standa, 1959.

¹²⁶) There are elements of it in *Phänomenologie der Religion* (1933) and there is a first elaboration in *De primitieve mensch en de religie* (1937; French translation: *L'homme primitif et la religion*. Paris, 1940).

¹²⁷)) See, e.g., *La structure de la mentalité primitive*, Paris: Alcan, 1928; *L'homme primitif et la religion*, Paris, 1940 (Dutch edition of 1937).

anthropology. He may be credited to have put the work of Lévy-Bruhl on primitive mentality in a phenomenological framework, though he may be blamed to have neglected the empirical side of the problem. Anyhow, when Van der Leeuw speaks of anthropological structures as different structures of human existence, it may be safely said that he was not doing research on behavior and thought as subjects in themselves. The data which he found in secondary sources were only expedient to his general considerations: that a distinction between "modern" and "primitive" mentality is to be conceived in terms of the distance experienced between subject and object; that the structures as such can nowhere be found in actual reality; that under the general structures partial structures can be distinguished, with a number of aspects; that connections can be constructed between "primitive" ways of experiencing and "religion" in the more general sense of the word, etc.

We have to do here with a philosophical-theological anthropology which is elaborated in *Der Mensch und die Religion. Anthropologischer Versuch* (Man and Religion. Attempt to an anthropology), published in 1941. Man as such is practically identified with *homo religiosus*; man as man-in-becoming is in a state of sin; the awakening of man's consciousness is a fall: such statements show that Van der Leeuw was less concerned with descriptive anthropology than with a doctrine on man as a religious being. Van der Leeuw's interest in "primitive mentality" is probably to be seen in the same light. First of all, Van der Leeuw knew a sort of horror for an abstract individual mind moving loose of the world; he also knew the nostalgia of an outlook which knows of a deeper unity of subject and object, and of something deeper in man which does not get much chance to develop in modern industrial society. Then, Van der Leeuw had a platonic idea of science, considering theology and philosophy to be "the" sciences: which gives to the whole of Van der Leeuw's scholarly work a theological and philosophical character. Again, there is behind his views on "primitives" a kind of rehabilitation of them on the human and religious level, after many a denigration of "the primitive" and of "naturalistic religion". In many respects, Van der Leeuw's interest in primitive religion can be compared with Kristensen's interest in the mystery religion of Antiquity. But where the latter represented "the religious other" as being absolutely different from "we moderns", Van der Leeuw was more

concerned with the unity of mankind and could use the notion of mental or anthropological structure in order to relativize obvious differences. His aim, indeed, was not to know primitives, but to interpret the phenomenon "man" and indirectly himself¹²⁸). Whether dissolving man into mental structures and arranging his expressions into ideal types is the best phenomenological solution possible is another question, but it is fair to look for the basic intentions of Van der Leeuw's *oeuvre* in order to explain his interests. One of the main weaknesses of his anthropology is certainly the fact that he did not make a distinction between man as he can be studied empirically, man as he ought to be or on a deeper level "is", and man according to his own self-interpretation. The theological ending of his book on "primitive religion" is a symptom of this weakness.

Art. Similar objections must be made with regard to Van der Leeuw's understanding and interpretation of art — where he used absolute categories too —. But here he was at least nearer to the sources in his main work on the subject, *Wegen en grenzen* (Roads and Boundaries), which appeared in 1932, with an enlarged edition in 1948 and a revised posthumous edition in 1955¹²⁹). The author is here more conscious of the limitations of his phenomenological method and keeps closer to the fundamental question: How do I understand it? The basic problem of this original study is, to what extent art can be "holy" art, and reversely, to what extent the realization of the holy

128) Th. P. van Baaren, in his critical discussion of Van der Leeuw's anthropological views, has shown convincingly that the actual relationship between Van der Leeuw's concept of "primitive mentality" and the living people of non-literate societies is very loose indeed. A penetrating analysis and criticism is given in his "De ethnologische basis van de fenomenologie van G. van der Leeuw" (The ethnological basis of the phenomenology of G. van der Leeuw), *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift*, XI, 5 (June 1957), pp. 321-353. See also his sweeping criticism of phenomenologists' practices in his "Are the Bororo parrots or are we?", in *Liber Amicorum* (offered to C. J. Bleeker), Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969, pp. 8-13.

129) *Wegen en Grenzen. Studie over de verhouding van religie en kunst.* Amsterdam: H. J. Paris, 1932, 1948² (considerably expanded), 1955³ (revised and edited by E. L. Smelik). This third edition has been translated into German by Mrs. A. Piper: *Vom Heiligen in der Kunst* (Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann, 1957); from the German edition an English translation has been made, which appeared in 1963 under the title of *Sacred and Profane Beauty. The Holy in Art*, with a preface by Mircea Eliade (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press and Holt, Rinehart & Winston; London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson).

can be "art": whereby the relations between — Christian and other — religion and the arts are treated historically, phenomenologically and theologically. Van der Leeuw has been one of the few protestant theologians who presented a theological aesthetics. It is perhaps not superfluous to remind Van der Leeuw's major interest in liturgy, on which he had an original position in his church: here he became more and more a "*theologian of incarnation*" as is obvious in his theology of the sacraments. In this position, in the last analysis, is to be found the common intention of his phenomenology of art, of religion, and of the sacraments.

Phenomenology had a great significance for Van der Leeuw. Among many other things, it provided a solution to the problem of the separation of subject and object, it provided an alternative for a scientific explaining away of religion, it combined both scholarly and religious points of view within the autonomous field of "understandability". And not least it had an eminent theological task in presenting a "check to the theologian's tendency to interpret data in the light of the peculiar conceptions of himself or his own religious community" ¹³⁰), and in preparing and facilitating the transition from historical critical scholarship to systematic theology.

Given the fact that Van der Leeuw placed phenomenology of religion in a theological framework — perhaps as a middle rail between the parallel rails of empirical knowledge and Christian theology — a study of his theological thought appears to be mandatory for a correct understanding of his phenomenology ¹³¹). There may turn up striking parallelisms between certain views on the Christian faith and church and certain insights into religion as an anthropological structure and a quest for meaning. Until now, no study has been made of Van der

¹³⁰) Quoted from John B. Carman's article "The Theology of a Phenomenologist", *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, XXIX, 3 (April 1965), pp. 13-42. The quotation is on p. 31.

¹³¹) This is the correct point of departure of Jan Hermelink's study, *Verstehen und Bezeugen. Der theologische Ertrag der 'Phänomenologie der Religion' des G. van der Leeuw*. München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1960. Van der Leeuw's phenomenology has been determined — and this consciously and on purpose — by theological categories. It has a liturgical intention. Some other phenomenologies of religion have also been determined by theological categories, but less explicitly.

Leeuw's theology and its orientation with regard to the theological problems of the first half of this century in his country. His stress on creation, his later development of a theology of incarnation, his ideas on revelation are to be scrutinized. There is all reason to assume that his classification of religious phenomena, his arrangement of fundamental religious structures, and the culmination of his phenomenology and anthropology in a specific Christian faith have theological roots: *so that Van der Leeuw finally should be understood as the theologian he wanted to be*. On a deeper level, in his sermons and spiritual writings something could be detected of his personal religious motivations: the desire to go from the finite to the infinite, to remove the separation of subject and object, to envisage a cosmos of harmony, to cultivate certain forms of religious experience, to find that "unity of life" for which he was looking in religion and art ¹³²). His double interest in phenomenology (anthropology) and theology, his double self-interpretation as man and as minister of the church, together with his many roles, activities and commitments — each with great dedication and enthusiasm — suggest a complex personality behind the professional phenomenologist, who was thereby theologian, historian of religions, man of letters and arts, musician, cabinet minister, "servant of God and professor in Groningen" ¹³³), *uomo virtuoso* ¹³⁴).

C. J. BLEEKER ¹³⁵)

C. J. Bleeker's phenomenology of religion¹³⁶) consists of three parts: a *theōria*, a *logos* and an *entelecheia* of religious phenomena. Their

¹³²) Van der Leeuw wanted to connect religion and society, Christianity and culture, theology and the Arts and Sciences. He should be seen against the background of the secularisation of Dutch society and the theological crisis in Dutch protestantism between the two world wars. In all of this Van der Leeuw has been creatively involved.

¹³³) This is the title of the fine life sketch of G. van der Leeuw by his brilliant student Fokke Sierksma in *Prof. Dr. G. van der Leeuw: dienaar van God en hoogleraar te Groningen*. Introduction by H. de Vos. Amsterdam: Het Wereldvenster, 1951.

¹³⁴) The University Library in Groningen has a number of papers of G. van der Leeuw, plus a complete set of all his publications catalogued by F. Sierksma. They number about 540 and this may be one of the reasons why, apart from some smaller articles, no study has been published as yet on G. van der Leeuw in his "essence and manifestations". In this country such a list of publications is exceptional.

¹³⁵) C. J. Bleeker was born in 1899, studied theology at the University of

functions can perhaps best be summarized as follows:

The *theōria* is concerned with the meaning of the religious phenomena according to a specific scheme of classification. It "... leads to an understanding of the religious implications of various aspects of religion which occur all over the world" ¹³⁷). In a more phenomenological way than in the usual scheme of God—Man—Religion (religion understood as the relation between God and man), the scheme of Holy Vision—Holy Road—Holy Acts is worked out, as containing the three main categories of classification. Under "Holy Vision" — i.e. on God and on salvation — are treated the different forms which the

Leyden, and obtained his Th. D. degree there in 1929 with a dissertation on *De beteekenis van de Egyptische godin Ma-a-t* (The significance of the Egyptian goddess Ma-a-t), Leyden, 1929. He was Professor of the History of Religions and Phenomenology of Religion at the University of Amsterdam from 1946 to 1969, and General Secretary of the International Association for the History of Religions from 1950 to 1970. His special field is egyptology, where he published alongside his dissertation and a number of articles: *Die Geburt eines Gottes. Eine Studie über den ägyptischen Gott Min und sein Fest* (1956) and *Egyptian Festivals. Enactments of Religious Renewal* (1967); both studies were published by E. J. Brill in Leiden. Professor Bleeker lives now in retirement in Amsterdam.

136) Its "torso" can be found in a volume which makes available in English, French and German a number of previously published papers and articles: *The Sacred Bridge. Researches into the Nature and Structure of Religion*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963. For the formal side of his phenomenology see especially the chapter "The Phenomenological Method" (pp. 1-15, of 1959), "Some Remarks on the 'Entelecheia' of Religious Phenomena" (pp. 16-24, of 1957), "La structure de la religion" (pp. 25-35, of 1951), "The Key Word of Religion" (pp. 36-51, of 1947). The further content of this phenomenology is contained in the other chapters of *The Sacred Bridge* and more specifically in two publications in Dutch: *Inleiding tot een phaenomenologie van den godsdienst* (Introduction to a phenomenology of religion), Assen: Van Gorcum, 1934; and *De structuur van de Godsdienst. Hoofddlijnen ener fenomenologie van de godsdienst* (The structure of religion. Main lines of a phenomenology of religion), Den Haag: Servire, n.d. [1956]. Compare also the design of *Historia Religionum. Handbook for the History of Religions*. Vol. I: *Religions of the Past*. Vol. II: *Religions of the Present*. Edited by C. Jouco Bleeker and Geo Widengren. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970 and 1971. On the relations between Christianity and other religions, see *Christ in Modern Athens. The Confrontation of Christianity with Modern Culture and the Non-Christian Religions*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965.

A bibliography of C. J. Bleeker was published in *Liber Amicorum. Studies in Honour of Professor Dr. C. J. Bleeker*. Published on the occasion of his retirement from the chair of the History of Religions and the Phenomenology of Religion at the University of Amsterdam (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), pp. 1-4. A complete collection of his articles has been donated to the Theological Institute of the University of Amsterdam.

137) *The Sacred Bridge*, pp. 14 and 16.

idea of the holy, of the deity and of the gods has taken in the religious history of mankind. The section "Holy Road" — i.e. of man's life and of the world's history — deals with the different conceptions which have been formed of the nature, origin and destiny of man and the cosmos. Under "Holy Acts" are subsumed all the material and spiritual acts which man has performed against the background of a religious conception of life and world: the different forms of cult, the different kinds of piety, the different sorts of religious doctrine. There evidently is in each concrete case a connection between vision, road and acts in a religious community, and there is a certain logic in the way in which the one follows from the other.

The *logos* is the structure of religious phenomena. Its study "... uncovers the hidden structure of the different religions by showing that they are built up according to strict inner laws" ¹³⁸). In the last analysis the phenomenologist is concerned here with the logic according to which the religious sense develops itself, whatever may be the institutional setting. Bleeker looks for those factors which determine the structure of a religious datum or of a complex of phenomena. As such, four permanent categories are distinguished: (1) constant forms, i.e. forms in which the relationship between God and man is represented; (2) irreducible elements, i.e. the fact of religion itself which cannot be deduced from something non-religious, and the fact of the typical individuality of the different religions which cannot be reduced to one basic religion; (3) points of crystallization, i.e. the religious *habitus* of man and the different sectors of reality towards which man can orient himself religiously; (4) typical factors, i.e. those factors which characterize religion in general and the different religions in particular.

The *entelecheia* of phenomena is the way in which an essence realizes itself by its manifestations or phenomena in the course of history ¹³⁹). The search for an *entelecheia* of religious phenomena is the quest for a logical idea in the nature of the religious development over the last few thousand years ¹⁴⁰). The *entelecheia* represents the dynamics of phenomena as opposed to the more static *theōria* and

¹³⁸) *Ibid.*, pp. 14 and 17.

¹³⁹) It is "... the course of events in which the essence is realized by its manifestations" (*The Sacred Bridge*, pp. 14 and 17).

¹⁴⁰) *The Sacred Bridge*, p. 16.

structure or *logos* of phenomena. Bleeker treats here successively the topics of the origin of religion, of a "historical logic" in the course of the history of religions, of "imperfect" or "impure" ¹⁴¹⁾ religion, and of a possible "gradual rising of the religious level" ¹⁴²⁾ in the course of time. The conclusion is "... that religion is man's inseparable companion. It is an invincible, creative and self-generating force" ¹⁴³⁾.

"The wish to understand the significance of certain religious ideas leads to a systematization of religious facts, taken from different religions" ¹⁴⁴⁾, and it is this passion for understanding and for systematic clarity which may be called to be the driving force behind Bleeker's insistence on the value of phenomenology of religion, and his fight for the recognition of the discipline. In drawing the following sketch of his idea of phenomenology of religion, we take as starting point a recent article of synthesis: "The Conception of Man in the Phenomenology of Religion" ¹⁴⁵⁾.

The history of religions as the study of religions in history and that of religious data as separate facts in their respective historical contexts leads of necessity to phenomenological investigations which compare elements of different religions with each other in order to detect parallels and analogies. Such investigations, in their turn, cannot but lead to an appreciation of the specific and unique quality of religious phenomena as compared with other ones. They also lead to further inquiring into the total structure of religion as such and of different groups of religions. Concretely, Bleeker asks in the first place for the religious significance of constantly recurring phenomena which apparently are constitutive elements of religion as such. In the second place, by severing the facts from their immediate historical and social context and by combining them in an ideological connection, he strives after an insight into the meaning and structure of these facts as religious phenomena.

It is necessary to note that Bleeker uses the term "phenomenology" in a double sense. In the first place it indicates a concrete discipline, which distinguishes itself from other scholarly disciplines by its aim

¹⁴¹⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 15 and p. 21 respectively.

¹⁴²⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁴³⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁴⁴⁾ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁵⁾ *Studia Missionalia*, XIX (1970), pp. 13-18.

to classify and understand most if not all religious phenomena. In the second place, however, the term denotes an objective, scholarly attitude and approach to the phenomenon of religion as subject of research: an attitude and approach which are common to all scholarly inquiries into religion. "It is evident that this phenomenological method is the only valid principle of the study of religion" ¹⁴⁶). What is called here a "method" is perhaps rather a specific attitude. This attitude, in Bleeker's wording, distinguishes itself by two features:

(I) The student of religion tries to suspend any judgment on his part and puts himself into the position of the listener who does not judge according to preconceived notions. With regard to religion in particular, he does not concern himself with the question of the possible truth or untruth of religion and of religious phenomena, leaving this problem to philosophy of religion and to theology. He simply accepts as proper subject of study all phenomena that are professed to be religious. He is not concerned with the metaphysical background of (a) religion, and not either with a distinction between genuine and impure religion ¹⁴⁷). The whole of this attitude is characterized with the term "epoche".

(II) The student of religion is in search of the essentials of the religious phenomena, also called their "essence and structure" ¹⁴⁸). This interest and effort is typified with the term "eidetic vision".

Although the terminology of "epoche" and "eidetic vision" has an Husserlian sound, Bleeker emphatically denies that he uses these terms in any philosophical sense whatsoever ¹⁴⁹).

The author distinguishes three conceptions which are current regarding the nature of phenomenology of religion as a scholarly discipline:

- (1) It would be the classification and description of religious phenomena, as the older descriptive school demanded;

¹⁴⁶) "The Conception...", p. 16.

¹⁴⁷) "Only subsequently, an attempt may be made to distinguish between genuine religion and impure religion" ("The Conception...", p. 16). Comp.: "Subsequently the attempt may come to distinguish what is genuinely religious from what is spurious" (*The Sacred Bridge*, p. 3). The criterion for this distinction is the way in which phenomena are tuned in to the holy or the divine.

¹⁴⁸) I.e. "the essentials" in *The Sacred Bridge*, p. 3; "essence and structure" in "The Conception...", p. 16.

¹⁴⁹) "The Conception...", p. 19.

- (2) It would be the distinction made between different types of religion, and the subsequent elucidation of the religious significance of each type;
- (3) It would be the search for the essence and structure of the religious phenomena.

Bleeker counts himself among the adherents of the third school. "The adherents of this last school are guided by the conviction that the structure of the religious phenomena is determined by an inner logic, and that the very task of the discipline consists in detecting this religious logic, which works otherwise than the rational logic, but which possesses a rationality of its own, easily to be disclosed by the student of phenomenology of religion who approaches his material in an unbiased way" ¹⁵⁰).

What is needed besides the necessary factual knowledge, is to know how to free oneself from preconceptions, and the gift of intuition. The phenomenologist starts with an intuitive notion of religion; he then listens to the believers and ascertains with his intuition what is authentic and what is not. He strives after absolute impartiality, not passing in any sense a judgment of truth of religion. Phenomenology of religion is no science of the essence of religion as such but it attempts "... to comprehend the essence of larger or smaller complexes of religious phenomena" ¹⁵¹). In reply to the reproach which has been advanced that phenomenology of religion, as Bleeker views it, uses certain principles of philosophical phenomenology like "epoche" and "eidos" in a wrong way, Bleeker declares: "It is not clear what harm would be in this. For it is clear as daylight that phenomenology of religion uses these terms in a figurative sense. Exactly at this point it becomes evident that there is a fundamental difference between the two disciplines which have the name in common. The author is conscious of the fact that he here makes a personal pronouncement. In his opinion the phenomenology of religion should keep at a distance from all philosophical implications" ¹⁵²).

¹⁵⁰) *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁵¹) "Its only pretension is that it may manage to detect the structure of a greater or smaller complex of religious phenomena", and the discipline "... aims at understanding the structure and the sense of constitutive factors of religion" ("Comparing the religio-historical and the theological method", *Numen*, XVIII, 1 (April 1971), pp. 9-29; the quotation is from p. 19).

¹⁵²) "The Conception...", p. 19.

The phenomenologist is concerned with the religious significance of his material. The highest norm is thereby an impartiality which demands "...that religion should be understood as what it stands for, namely as a serious testimony of religious people that they possess knowledge of God" ¹⁵³). Phenomenology "...is an empirical science without philosophical aspirations" ¹⁵⁴) ; it "...is a historical discipline, though with a systematizing tenor" ¹⁵⁵), which should safeguard itself against philosophical presuppositions and tendencies; it finally "...aims at knowing the historical and ideological truth in the world of religion for the sake of truth itself" ¹⁵⁶). Bleeker shows a particular concern about the necessity of awareness of one's presuppositions and the need of a clear methodology. "It must be acknowledged that the students of the phenomenology of religion are not always sufficiently clear as to their method and the object of their study" ¹⁵⁷).

For any correct appreciation of Bleeker's view on phenomenology of religion it will be necessary to take into account the papers collected in *The Sacred Bridge; Researches into the nature and structure of religion*, of 1963. By such "nature and structure" is understood the way in which the phenomena are aligned upon the sacred or the divine which determines them. The title of the book — the "sacred bridge" — is significant and reveals the perspective in which Bleeker works. "This means that the author considers religion to be the holy bridge between heaven and earth, between the divine world and the domain of man. In his opinion the facts of the history of religions cannot and should not be interpreted in another way, because religious people themselves have never understood their belief otherwise. Phrased in scientific terms this approach can best be called the phenomenological method. This method aims at excluding all kinds of preconceptions, at doing full justice to the language which the facts speak and at sharpening the eye for what is genuinely religious" ¹⁵⁸).

In the last analysis, Bleeker's phenomenology aims at an openness for religious testimonies on the Holy and for witnesses of knowledge of

¹⁵³) *The Sacred Bridge*, p. 9.

¹⁵⁴) *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁵⁵) "The Conception...", p. 20.

¹⁵⁶) *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁵⁷) *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁵⁸) *The Sacred Bridge*, p. VIII.

the Divine ¹⁵⁹). The criterion hereby cannot be but "evidence": impartiality forbids to pronounce either assent or dissent. In a recent article ¹⁶⁰) in this journal, Bleeker admits that the question of the essence of religion plays a certain part in phenomenology of religion: the phenomenologist starts his investigation aided by a mostly sub-conscious notion of what religion is. In the course of his work an articulation of this implicit idea takes place: either in the form of a key word — "the divine" indicating the heart of religion, or in the form of a description of the structure of religion according to its elements and composition ¹⁶¹). In this way the phenomenologist sees his work "...as an attempt to answer the question in which both scholars and non scholarly people are interested: what is religion?" ¹⁶²).

K. A. H. HIDDING ¹⁶³)

In his study *De evolutie van het godsdienstig bewustzijn* ¹⁶⁴) (The evolution of religious consciousness) of 1965, Hidding is dealing with

¹⁵⁹) Bleeker takes a distance from anthropological approaches to religion. "The author must confess that he has come to the conclusion — a rather 'heretical' one — that anthropology has only relative importance for the study of the phenomenology of religion. Religion can never be totally understood purely from the empirical being of man. For the object of phenomenology of religion is not to understand the believer as an anthropological phenomenon, but to offer more insight into the conception of the Holy which apparently can overwhelm people so strongly that their anthropological nature is fully transformed" ("The Conception...", p. 21).

¹⁶⁰) "Comparing the religio-historical and the theological method", *Numen*, XVIII, 1 (April 1971), pp. 9-29. This article shows also the setting of phenomenology of religion in the Netherlands. For his view on phenomenology of religion in international scholarship, and especially the work of Geo Widengren, see C. J. Bleeker, "Wie steht es um die Religionsphänomenologie?", *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, XXVIII, 5/6 (Sept.-Nov. 1971), pp. 303-308.

¹⁶¹) "Comparing...", p. 19.

¹⁶²) *The Sacred Bridge*, p. VIII. On the problem of the evaluations contained in C. J. Bleeker's phenomenology of religion, see Geo Widengren, "Some Remarks on the Methods of the Phenomenology of Religion", *Universitetet och Forskningen* (Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Skrifter rörande Uppsala Universitetet 17), pp. 250-260, especially pp. 251-2.

¹⁶³) K. A. H. Hidding was born in 1902, studied Indonesian Languages and Literatures at the University of Leyden, and obtained his Ph. D. degree there in 1929 with *Nji Pohatij Sangiang Sri. A dissertation on the origin and significance of the rice-plant as it is told in Sudanese and Javanese dramas*. Leiden: Dubbel-deman, 1929. He worked a number of years on Java and was Professor of the History of the Living Religions and of Phenomenology of Religion at the University of Leyden from 1948 to 1972. Professor Hidding lives now in retirement.

¹⁶⁴) Pocket edition Utrecht-Antwerpen: Het Spectrum, Aula nr. 184, 1965.

religious consciousness as such, and this book offers the main elements of his phenomenology of religion based on it. The author aims at understanding the history of religion as an evolutive process of differentiation and liberation and at interpreting the religious varieties of mankind from the point of view of philosophical anthropology. His concern, consequently, is both historical and philosophical.

Within the field of history, Hidding posits two major changes or mutations of human consciousness, revealing themselves in characteristic religious expressions and showing different religious structures. A first break is that which takes place in the naturalistic-ontological structure prevailing, e.g., in Antiquity, ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, in Hinduism, and in the religions of non-literate peoples. This break gives rise to a historical-prophetical structure as it exists in Judaism, Zoroastrianism and Islam, and, though in a different way, also in Buddhism. The second break takes place in the ontological as well as in the prophetical structure and gives rise to a new, personalized structure as it exists in Christianity.

The ontological structure is essentially oriented toward Being manifesting itself in the cosmos. God is here identical to this Being, and the powers by virtue of which man exists are venerated. In the historical structure, on the contrary, the cosmos is deprived of its divine character and considered as a finite and temporal creation. God is here dissociated from Being and considered as Creator with absolute rights over his creation. A phenomenological analysis shows how the two structures are characterized by two different kinds of religious phenomena. In the first case, these are images as major manifestations of the divine Being; and myth, cult, magic, mysticism and augury, which are meant to realize or at least to lay bare the divine reality on earth; death is here considered to a large extent as the origin of life.

In the second case, on the contrary, death like any other earthly phenomenon has been deprived of any divine character. The image makes place for the word, which is conceived as a divine command or name, while book and law replace myth, rite, etc. The notion of linear time comes instead of the cyclical time concept of the first

Since no publications of K. A. H. Hidding are available in English and only little in German, we dwell somewhat longer on this work. The abstract has been largely reproduced from our review of the book in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, IV, 3 (July, 1966), pp. 248-9.

structure; while here space was more important than time, now time prevails upon space. Man himself, while considered to be part of being in the first structure, becomes in the second structure a subject to whom being is subordinated. The "Ground of Being" manifests itself in the first structure through the image, in the second through the word, in the third through the human person. In each religion a tension between subsequent structures continues to exist, as the author shows in a short analysis of the major religions.

Hidding relates these religious structures to anthropological structures, which are treated, incidentally but significantly, in the first part of the book. He also relates the structural modification of the religious consciousness, as it appears in history, to a modification of the basic "anthropological" structure of man into two or three mental structures. The author conceives of man, like all reality, as being essentially a polarity. Man's polarity is that of body and mind, external appearance and consciousness. He is a physical as well as spiritual entity, and is so characterized by basic tensions like those between reality and possibility, space and time, etc. However, though like all reality of a polar structure, man alone develops to a self-consciousness, being able to distinguish himself from that reality which is different from his own, and to differentiate within this reality. In short, man constitutes a centre within himself, to which he relates reality. Though part of the given "immanent" world by his body, man is able to transcend this world by means of his self-conscious mind which allows for language, culture, and religion. Man's very structure of being, a unity of body and mind, allows for his possibilities of change. The concrete forms which this change takes depend on which pole prevails, so as to make the notion of immanence or that of transcendence dominant. This is culturally and traditionally determined.

The religious and mental structures are related in the sense that the first is a manifestation of the second. Where the pole of the body, e.g., is dominant, man is in the mental structure of participation. Here, religiously speaking, Being is recognized as God and man is recognized as a phenomenon akin to other phenomena. The senses and the visual perception are then, together with the image and with ontological classification-systems, of primary importance. Where, on the other hand, the pole of the mind is dominant, man is in the mental structure

of self-consciousness. Here, religiously speaking, Being and God are no longer identical, but the last is recognized as being a Spirit of absolute autonomous power. Man is here recognized as a subject of a unique nature, able to dominate the phenomena as objects which are simply created products of God conceived as Spirit. Intelligence and the ability to create concepts prevail here over senses and visual perception; words and conceptual systems are here of primary importance. A third mental structure is possible, whereby the two preceding extremes are seen in their relative interdependence, where the opposition of consciousness and being — mind and body — is transcended, where functional thought is performed, and where man situates himself beyond the polarity of body and mind when he reaches out to other men. According to the author, the religious structure of Christianity would correspond with this "personalized" mental structure. It would be a structure of its own, since Christianity is the religion of love of one's neighbour on the basis of a Divine revelation, which takes place through a human person instead of passing through image or word.

Hidding¹⁶⁵) defines the aim of phenomenology largely in the same terms as his predecessors. "The first task is to observe each phenomenon as well as possible in its own being, and to be able to understand approximately why the people concerned experience some phenomena as sacred and perform certain acts in order to give in this way expression to their religious life"¹⁶⁶). There is a concern for "the belief of the believers", which has consequences for the way in which these believers are described by the phenomenologist: "It is his first task to show to full advantage, always and everywhere, the belief of the believer, to understand and to describe this in such a way that the

165) We use here in particular the books *Mens en godsdienst. Levende godsdiensten phaenomenologisch belicht* (Man and Religion. Living Religions in a Phenomenological View), Delft: Gaade, 1954; and *God en goden. Wezen, waarheid en ontwikkeling der godsdiensten* (God and Gods. Essence, Truth and Development of the Religions), Assen: Van Gorcum; and Leiden: Universitaire Pers, 1960. Use has been made also of the address *Structurele godsdienstwetenschap* (Structural Science of Religion), Leiden, Universitaire Pers, 1967. Hidding's anthropology is contained in his *Geestesstructuur en cultuur. Hoofdpijnen ener fenomenologische anthropologie* (Mental structure and culture. Main lines of a phenomenological anthropology). The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1948. A number of articles on phenomenology of religion were published in Dutch.

166) *Mens en godsdienst*, p. 7.

people concerned would be able to recognize themselves, and to give to each religion its place in the great whole of the history of mankind, where it belongs" ¹⁶⁷). Hidding wants to take into account also the physical aspect of the believer: "Not the spirit, but the believing person, hide and hair, body and mind, is for the phenomenologist of religion the central phenomenon which he wants to understand" ¹⁶⁸). He also stresses the element of perception in phenomenological work, which can develop into contemplation or intuition as opposed to abstract theoretical knowledge; in this way the meaning of religious phenomena and of religion should be investigated.

In his methodology, Hidding calls a phenomenon something — be it concrete or "spiritual" — which manifests itself to us; this may happen through perception or by means of inference of a perception. The result is that we become aware of it, and indirectly also of ourselves. Man knows all beings — of being and of consciousness — only as polar, oppositional and reciprocal structures and as relations of tension. Being as such and consequently each phenomenon is a structured, four-dimensional unity of the factors of space and time. This dynamic-structural nature of reality allows for the changeability of man and his — also religious — consciousness.

In all that manifests itself to us there is, besides the part which is recognizable and which lends itself to scientific investigation, another part which remains basically unknown, "mysterious"; it is the latter part which constitutes the background or the dimension of infinity of the phenomenon. In his dealing with a phenomenon, man is fundamentally in relationship with both parts of it. This holds particularly true for religious phenomena as media of revelation; man can here undergo a more conscious relatedness to the background of the phenomenon, which cannot be known but which can be believed. The moment that this background is recognized as being "holy", as being "the mystery of Being", religion has occurred. This Holy "... is the hidden mysterious ground of all existence, which man experiences in revelation" ¹⁶⁹). "Something is a religious phenomenon if the believer considers it as sacred because he experiences that the mystery, on

¹⁶⁷) *Structurele godsdienstwetenschap*, p. 3.

¹⁶⁸) "Kanttekening", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* (December 1958), pp. 114-115. The quotation is from p. 115.

¹⁶⁹) *Mens en godsdienst*, p. 5.

which depends all existence and also his life, reveals itself here in a certain way" ¹⁷⁰). Phenomenology of religion, as a scholarly discipline, is concerned with the reactions of man to this revelation of the holy as a perception and an experience of revelation, and with the different forms in which man expresses such reactions. Each phenomenon indeed is a reaction of man upon — and an expression of — an inner experience, and should be understood as such.

Since different people react to and express the same kind of experience differently, it is impossible to understand man's belief or the forms of his religion without an insight in what man is. Consequently, it is necessary, in order to understand the different ways in which man reacts, to study him not only in his culture but also in his mental structure. Hidding has given much attention to this problem of mental structure and contends that, since the differentiation of religions is largely rooted in the structure of man, a phenomenology of religion must be based on a phenomenological anthropology. A major concern hereby is the unity of mankind ¹⁷¹) and the unity of religions; these are accounts of the last grounds of existence, which converge into one mystery ground, and they should be studied, consequently, from the point of view of their unity ¹⁷²).

The anthropology which Hidding designs is based on man as a dynamic structural unity of body and mind, as mentioned above. It is the different function of the image and the word in the religions, which serves as a criterion of division between the ontological and the historical structure. In the first case the eye is predominant and the image is perceived as a medium of revelation; in the second case the ear is predominant and it is the word which functions as a medium. Consequently, it is eye or ear through which the relation with Being is established. "Man as such is without question dependent on the mystery of Being from which he arises as a corporal, mental and social being, and into which he disappears again. The only question is whether and in which way he experiences his relationship to this Being which is God. Only this determines the nature of his belief" ¹⁷³).

For a proper appreciation of the anthropological phenomenology of

¹⁷⁰) *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁷¹) This makes the understanding of men possible.

¹⁷²) *God en goden*, p. 5.

¹⁷³) *De evolutie van het godsdienstig bewustzijn*, p. 133.

Hidding, one should take into account the way in which he envisages the religious problem. In his religion man finds his deepest roots, being linked here with the ground of Being; the believer claims to have the last truth here, viewed as a divine revelation. Differences in religion should not be attributed to different "revelatory mysteries"; they are rather due to the fact that man as a changeable being — this being a characteristic of his structure — necessarily knows the mystery of his ground as revealed each time in a different way¹⁷⁴). All resulting differences between the religions "... do not lift the essential unity of all religions, which all rest on the revelation of the mystery" ¹⁷⁵). Whatever man recognizes as holy is a revelation to him; it is for him the ground of all being and existence, and he has, for the sake of his life, to stay in relation with this ground which is absolute and mystery. The "unique and proper mode of appearance of mystery" ¹⁷⁶) is revelation, which takes place through a worldly phenomenon which acquires a sacred character for those to whose life meaning has been given in this way¹⁷⁷).

Th. P. VAN BAAREN ¹⁷⁸)

After his dissertation ¹⁷⁹) of 1951, in which the different elements of revelatory complexes are analyzed, Th. P. van Baaren published a number of books, of which *Wij mensen* ¹⁸⁰) may be considered a

¹⁷⁴) *God en goden*, p. 17.

¹⁷⁵) *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁶) *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁷⁷) For this background, see *God en goden*, Ch. I.

¹⁷⁸) Th. P. van Baaren was born in 1912, studied theology at the University of Utrecht, and obtained his Th. D. degree there in 1951 (See the following note). In 1952 he occupied the chair of the history of religions, phenomenology of religion, and Egyptian language and literature at the University of Groningen. His special fields are egyptology and especially the religions of non-literate peoples. He founded the Institute of Religious Iconography at the University of Groningen; his own collection of iconographical materials has been donated to this Institute.

¹⁷⁹) *Voorstellingen van openbaring phaenomenologisch beschouwd. Proeve van inleidend onderzoek, voornamelijk aan de hand der primitieve en oude godsdiensten* (Conceptions of Revelation Phenomenologically Considered. An introductory essay based principally upon primitive and ancient religions). Utrecht, 1951.

¹⁸⁰) *Wij mensen. Religie en wereldbeschouwing bij schriftloze volken* (We human beings. Religion and worldview among non-literate peoples). Utrecht: J. Bijleveld, 1960. A German translation appeared in 1964: *Menschen wie wir. Re-*

milestone. It means a definite departure from the traditional phenomenology of religion in the Netherlands and an option for the methods used in the social sciences as far as applicable in the study of religion. This study comes here to rest on an empirical basis, with research methods according to modern social science theory. Starting point of what Van Baaren calls "systematic study of religion"¹⁸¹) over and against "phenomenology of religion", is that religion ought to be studied as a part of culture, being closely connected with other parts of the culture under consideration. According to this model, religious complexes should be studied according to their cultural determinants, and religious phenomena should be studied as human expressions and behaviour in a given social and cultural context. Consequently, religion is not necessarily the revelation of one mystery or another, or a confrontation with an ultimate reality; it is as little necessarily a universal phenomenon as man is to be considered necessarily as a religious being. In this way a number of postulates of traditional phenomenology of religion are resolutely put aside. In this approach the different religions are considered as human models for the interpretation of man and world, and religion as such is studied in its functioning as a social model and interpreted as such. In this formalization of the study of religion on an empirical anthropological basis a number of problems of traditional phenomenology are automatically eliminated. No statements should be made which cannot be verified scientifically; the

ligion und Kult der schriftlosen Völker (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1964). A Swedish translation is in press. Another large study is *Korwars and Korwar Style. Arts and Ancestor Worship in Northwest New Guinea*, The Hague-Paris: Mouton, 1968. Van Baaren published the contents of his work in several other books in Dutch, e.g.: *Uit de wereld der religie* (From the world of religion), Arnhem, 1956; *Doolhof der goden. Inleiding tot de vergelijkende godsdienstwetenschap* (Labyrinth of the Gods. Introduction to the comparative study of religions), Amsterdam: Querido, 1960; *Van maansikkel tot rijzende zon. De grote godsdiensten van Azië* (From Crescent to Rising Sun. The large religions of Asia; with French and Spanish translations), Phoenix pocket nr. 34, 1960; *Dans en religie* (Dance and Religion; with German translation), Phoenix pocket nr. 66, 1962; *Scheppingsverhalen. De schepping der wereld volgens het geloof der volken* (Stories of Creation. The creation of the world according to the belief of the peoples), Amsterdam: Querido, 1964. A number of articles appeared in English.

¹⁸¹) Pending a forthcoming publication in English in 1973, we may refer to the article in German: "Systematische Religionswissenschaft", *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift*, XXIV, 2 (December 1969), pp. 81-88. The name "systematic study of religion" (systematische godsdienstwetenschap) has been coined in analogy and opposition to "systematic theology".

methods should be adapted to the material under consideration, and in view of new materials once accepted views and methods should constantly be revised. The study of religion should catch up with the progress made in the social sciences and the humanities over the last thirty to forty years.

Consequently, Van Baaren has the most serious objections against traditional phenomenology of religion. Apart from the pretensions of a phenomenological method which would be able to grasp the essence of religious phenomena, of religions or of religion as such, the whole stress on intuition is considered as unscientific insofar as no checking of its results is carried out by empirical investigations. Moreover, "understanding" as the ultimate aim of phenomenology with the help of intuition is not a legitimate scientific purpose, but rather a form of subjective art. The use of the *epoche* understood as the restraint of theological judgments in traditional phenomenology of religion served in practice as an indirect introduction to theology, once the moment had come to lift the *epoche*; consequently phenomenology of religion in actual practice functioned as *ancilla theologiae*. With regard to the work of Van der Leeuw in particular, Van Baaren has a number of objections on the basis of the material studied¹⁸²). In his phenomenological statements, e.g. on the non-literate people, Van der Leeuw could go explicitly contrarily to the facts; in many cases there is in his work a simplification and narrowing of the data in order to make them fit to a given system of thought and interpretation. On the whole there is an apologetic tendency in Van der Leeuw, which blinds him to the fact that, methodologically, there is no intrinsic connection between the study of religion on one hand and theology on the other. Van der Leeuw's studies on non-literate people and on "primitive mentality" are witness to a bad use of the limited primary sources which he used, of an extravagance in the use of dynamism as theory on religion, and of an ethnocentric way of thinking which overrates the difference between the civilized and the primitives, between "us" and "them". From a methodological point of view, Van der Leeuw's concept of structure as the "introduction" of some order or arrangement into a fundamentally chaotic reality — instead of the use of this concept to "discover" structures

182) See the publications mentioned in Note 128.

which are in a latent way present in the materials — is responsible for many uncritical interpretations. In general the whole terminology of traditional phenomenology of religion is unsatisfactory from a scholarly point of view: not only generalizations were made on the basis of data of only one religion or group of religions to religion in general, or there were remarkable unprecisions, but no sufficient analysis of the phenomena was made to refine the vocabulary. All in all, in its uncritical self-sufficiency traditional phenomenology of religion could not see itself where it failed: it now has to be abandoned.

CONCLUSION

Our survey of one century of Phenomenology of Religion in the Netherlands — starting with the year in which P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye obtained his Th. D. degree in 1871 — necessarily shows considerable gaps. The most serious lack is the absence of the actual results of research work, the contents of phenomenology, as laid down in the publications of the phenomenologists under consideration. Also, the discussions between phenomenologists themselves and the debates between phenomenologists on one hand and not only historians, philologists and anthropologists, but also philosophers and theologians on the other, had to be neglected. Again, the cultural and religious setting in which they worked — the faculties of theology, the intellectual climate, the public interest, the means of communication, the social background, the churches which they served — has been passed over in silence. And lack of space and competence prevents even the giving of an appreciation and judgment in equity and justice on the work of each individual phenomenologist; we leave it for the moment to the librarians whether they want to shelve their books under “history” or rather “philosophy”, under “arts” or rather “belles lettres”.

By and large five different trends can be distinguished in the Dutch “classical” phenomenology of religion over this period:

- (1) Phenomenology taken as a *classification of religious phenomena* from different religious traditions. Through comparative research and general categories religious data are brought into different classes. Each class of data distinguishes itself from the others

by certain common traits between such data, and within each class the data are distinguished according to their elements. In this sense phenomenology has an encyclopedic nature and could be compared with Linnaeus' classification of the plant world. (Ex. P. D. Chantepie de la Saussaye, H. Th. Obbink).

- (2) Phenomenology understood as the *search of basic motifs or ideas* in different religious traditions. One fundamental motif or idea held in common by more than one religion allows to bring these religions, in view of the motif or idea in question, into one group. If the motif or idea in question is of a very fundamental nature, one might better speak of a common religious apprehension or orientation in view of that idea. (Ex. W. B. Kristensen).
- (3) Phenomenology taken as a *division of religious phenomena within a fundamental structure of religion as such*. The phenomenon of religion is comprehended in an idea; this idea is laid open into its elements; the concrete religious phenomena are then fitted into this framework. (Ex. G. van der Leeuw, C. J. Bleeker).
- (4) Phenomenology taken as the understanding and discernment of religious phenomena according to a fundamental structure of man. Different human possibilities of thought and perception are distinguished, and man's religious expressions are understood accordingly. One can think here of different "mentalities", "attitudes", "anthropological structures", etc. (Ex. K. A. H. Hidding, G. van der Leeuw).
- (5) Phenomenology understood as the *interpretation of man's religious history in terms of a development* (direct or broken) in time-sequence. Introduction of criteria, e.g. the degree of differentiation, to measure the "stage" of a given religiosity within an evolutionary pattern (Ex. C. P. Tiele, K. A. H. Hidding).

Looking at the general intentions of phenomenology of religion in this country over this period, we might say that the general tendency and partly the motivation of the discipline has been to affirm the autonomous character of religion and religious faith, and to object against any kind of reduction of religion to something else than religion without denying the role of non-religious factors in religion. Religion as a value, studied through the testimonies of religious persons and groups, has been a matter of sincere concern, and all phenomenologists of religion may be said to have been really committed in this respect. It

may be noticed that nearly all these phenomenologists have been accomplished theologians and that most of them remained in active service to their churches. They made a very serious effort to pursue their studies in an impartial way, using the *epoche* as a bracketing of theological judgments in particular. It is fair to say that the University of Leyden, and in particular the teaching of W. B. Kristensen, has had a tremendous influence on phenomenology of religion in the Netherlands, and on history of religions also. Although the different phenomenologists had their own motivations and inspirations, their common effort was to cope with the problem of a systematic study of religious facts apart from their immediate historical and social context; they did this by investigating the meaning of particular classes, groups, types or clusters of religious phenomena. The approach of the subject was on the whole that of a direct and pragmatic realism, a certain matter-of-factness being a characteristic of Dutch scholarship in general. As exceptions must be mentioned both W. B. Kristensen and G. van der Leeuw. Where there is no national tradition of philosophical thought, phenomenology of religion in the Netherlands could keep aloof from philosophical phenomenology and from philosophy altogether¹⁸³). The reasons for this disinterestedness in philosophical reflection lead to meditation. On the other hand, since religious phenomena were the focus of attention, phenomenologists of religion only rarely did concrete research on the non-religious aspects of reality. It is not unfair to notice that nearly all phenomenologists worked with a concept of religion which was strongly determined by their own culture and religion. If in the eyes of non-Christians the work of Western phenomenologists of religion in general is determined by their Christian background, even if these are not aware of it, this will hold true for Dutch phenomenology of religion too, and this also leads to meditation. It should be noted that in the period under consideration phenomenology has neither been applied in the study of the living world religions, either individually

183) It should be emphasized that there is no real connection between the work of the phenomenologists of religion treated here and philosophical phenomenology as inaugurated by Edmund Husserl, with which these scholars cannot be said to have been really familiar. At most some philosophical notions were taken over in an eclectic way and adapted to basic views which these scholars had on religion and on the study of religion. It may be submitted for further consideration that, on the whole, "classical" phenomenology of religion has had an apologetic function and a solipsistic tendency.

or in their mutual relations, nor in that of the phenomenologist's own religion.

From the scholarly point of view, it would seem that phenomenology of religion has most suffered under the absence of a clear phenomenological norm of general validity. The stress on intuition favoured a certain individualism whereby the personal authority of the "master" could not but assert itself strongly; it also had the effect that the other empirical disciplines working on religious data could not but wonder about the nature of phenomenology of religion as a scholarly discipline. There can be no doubt that future research in this field will have to be done in teamwork, and that the nature of the norms of phenomenological scholarship will be subject to further reflection and discussion. One final remark on a century of phenomenology of religion in the Netherlands may be added. The very concern of the researchers in this field with human testimonies on the absolute easily gives way to the natural tendency to become an indirect spokesman of the Absolute itself. It is at this point, exactly, that the question arises whether phenomenology of religion finally is based on some kind of faith. The simple fact that in this country phenomenology of religion is taught in the faculties of theology, has brought about that especially theological considerations have had much weight in the question whether phenomenology of religion implies, in the last analysis, a theology or not.

This is not the place and time to elaborate the present author's own views on the discipline ¹⁸⁴). He pleads for a kind of phenomenological research in the field of religion, that would concentrate on those phenomena where enough materials are available to come to valid conclusions, and that would pay special attention to living religion. Phenomenology is a possible way to investigate the meaning of things to people, also if it concerns a religious meaning; it is thereby a possible way to apprehend human intentions. If carried out on a logical basis, on adequate materials, interrogating them intelligently, phenomenology will be justified as a distinct way to investigate religion, or

¹⁸⁴) The main lines are contained in the papers "Phenomenology of religion: a scholarly discipline, a philosophy, or an art?", "The category of faith in a phenomenology of religion", "Grundsätzliches zur Religionsphänomenologie", "Religion as meaning. An essay", and "The study of Islam as a religious signification system".

for that matter any human reality. If phenomenological research in general is concerned with the problem of meaning in terms of intentions and is able to reflect on it, so then is phenomenological research in the field of religion.

23 November 1971

SRUTI AND PHILOSOPHY

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I

It is sometimes said that the teachings of those Upaniṣads usually accepted as canonical shows development from a lower to a higher level of understanding, and that this development, which is said to be historical as well as doctrinal, is indicated by a movement within these scriptures from a less abstract to a more abstract mode of expression — from what is sometimes called a less philosophical to a more philosophical way of speaking. A typical example of this claim is found in a work by Bharatan Kumarappa: and in order to show how little reason there is to have faith in at least the major form-critical methods used by people who make these claims¹), as well as to throw some light upon the function of certain Upaniṣadic symbols used to refer to Brahman, I want to look at the suggestions of Sri Kumarappa. In doing so, I intend to argue,

(i) that the historical development he speaks of cannot *in fact* be illustrated from the Upaniṣads, which, if anything, seem to suggest a quite contrary development;

(ii) that the assumption of doctrinal development is based on two more basic assumptions which, once more, seem contrary to fact;

(iii) that, if the Upaniṣads are *śruti*, a development through history from a less to a more adequate understanding of the doctrines these scriptures seek to teach is anyway impossible.

II

In his work, *The Hindu Conception of the Deity*²), Sri Kumarappa claims to trace the pUpaniṣadic doctrine of Brahman from (i) its sup-

1) I am speaking here not only of claims made about Hindu Scriptures but of any scriptures whatever. And though I will in this article be speaking primarily of one group of Hindu scriptures—namely, the Upaniṣads—I believe that most of my arguments apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to other scriptures as well, Hindu or otherwise.

2) B. Kumarappa: *The Hindu Conception of the Deity*; London (Luzac), 1934.

posed beginnings in the cosmogonic myth found in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 1:4:1-5, to (ii) the referring use of words like 'water', 'food' and 'breath' (*prāṇa*), which normally are used to indicate natural phenomena, and then beyond to (iii) a still higher level, namely, the "level of abstract thought"³⁾, in which 'space' (*ākāśa*) is used as a symbol for Brahman.

In affirming this first supposed transition (from cosmogonic myth to the use of nature symbols), Sri Kumarappa begins with the claim that the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* myth, which likely supplies us with the earliest symbols for Brahman found in the Upaniṣads, is no better than a "crude anthropomorphism"⁴⁾. From thence, he continues, "we rise to a distinctively higher level of philosophical thought"⁴⁾ when we progress "to explanations in terms of natural phenomena"⁴⁾ — viz., "explanations" in terms of 'water', 'food' and '*prāṇa*'. These explanations, he says, arose "precisely because these are absolutely essential to human life".⁴⁾ Now clearly, certain assumptions are at work here, most glaringly that the Upaniṣadic ṛṣis were attempting to present some kind of "philosophical thought". That this is a false way to approach these (or any) scriptures will, I trust, be clear from examination of the more basic assumption underlying this approach — namely, the Western myth of 'progres'. By this I mean, the Western assumption that all movement forward in time amounts to advancement, coupled perhaps with, or even implied by, the Christian notion of 'progressive revelation'.

It may be true, and shortly I will argue that in a way it is true, that "Whether the ultimately real is conceived of as Water, Food, or Breath, it is precisely because these are absolutely essential to human life".⁵⁾ But to view the relation between the creation myth and the use of nature symbols in referring to Brahman, as an historical movement from a "crude anthropomorphism" to a "higher level of philosophical thought" can be shown to be a viewpoint that has no grounds, both because there is no good reason to assume that the creation myth is in any sense "crude", or that the use of nature symbols represents a higher level of understanding. And even if there were good reasons, this would not of itself be sufficient to establish the supposed *historical*

3) B. Kumarappa; op cit; p. 6.

4) B. Kumarappa; op cit; p. 3.

5) B. Kumarappa; op cit; p. 5.

development. I want now to examine some textual evidences in the hope of showing why I think this to be so.

III

Bṛhadāraṇyaka expresses the myth of creation in words which remind one at once of the opening of the Book of Genesis, and of the first few verses of the Fourth Gospel.

In the beginning this (world) was only the self (ātman), in the shape of a person. Looking around he saw nothing else than the shape of a person. He first said 'I am'. Therefore arose the name of I. Therefore, even to this day when one is addressed he says first 'This is I' and then speaks whatever other name he may have... He was afraid. Therefore one who is alone is afraid... He, verily, had no delight. Therefore he who is alone has no delight. He desired a second. He became as large as a man and a woman in close embrace. He caused that self to fall in two parts. From that arose husband and wife. Therefore, as Yajñavalkya used to say, this body is one half of oneself, like one of the two halves of a split pea. Therefore this space is filled by a wife. He became united with her. From that human beings were produced.⁶⁾

To this, Sri Kumarappa remarks, "Such crude anthropomorphism where the Prime Being is conceived of on the analogy of a man, and the method of creation is regarded on the analogy of animal reproduction, stamps the theory as one of the oldest preserved for us in the Upaniṣads."⁷⁾ But to argue in this way seems to me as cogent as it would be to argue, of the Fourth gospel, that, because it uses the relational implication "with God" (πρὸς τὸν Θεόν) of the Word (λόγος), rather than simply stating outright that "the Word *was* God" (Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος), this Gospel must, therefore, be a "crude" and pioneer work. It is anyway surely false to imagine that no *interpretation* other than that this teaching is "crude" *can be* entertained; and the depth I would argue plainly to be here I will illustrate with a quite different suggested interpretation of two aspects of this teaching, two aspects chosen quite at random.

Aspect (1): The first manifestation of the Supreme Being was to establish Himself as the referent of the reflexive pronoun: "Therefore arose the name of 'I' (*tato'ham nāmābhavat*). Hence, the suggestion is that, whenever the reflexive pronoun is properly used — used,

6) *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1:4:1-4. *The Principal Upaniṣads*; ed. Radhakrishnan; London (Allen & Unwin); 1953.

7) B. Kumarappa; *op cit*; p. 4.

that is, to indicate a person — the Supreme Being is its ultimate referent.

Aspect (2): Whatever is predicated of the Supreme Being, is necessarily predicable of any being by whom the reflexive pronoun is properly used. His behaviour is the archetype of what would necessarily be the behaviour of any situation to which person-talk can be applied. "He was afraid. Therefore one who is alone is afraid." "He, verily, had no delight. Therefore he who is alone has no delight". Hence, the ultimate explanation of all rightful movement (*dharma*) of any situation to which talk about persons applies, is that, *in illo tempore*, the Supreme Being so moved. Hence, to draw forth the central principle here expressed; since influence of the Supreme Being entails His presence (for nothing *but* the Supreme Being can move *as* He does), all personal movement is, ultimately, movement of this Being.

I find nothing deserving the epithet "crude" in this. I am not of course suggesting the ṛṣis to have had these interpretations in their minds in expressing themselves as they did; nor even that, had this way of construing their words been put to them, they would have understood the language employed. My suggestion is only that the scriptures are open to such interpretations as can clearly be seen to be of utmost complexity. In plain words: there can be no good reason to deny such 'depth' of the scriptures in question.

IV

Kumarappa has argued the next phase in the supposed historical development of Upaniṣadic "philosophical thought" to be "explanations in terms of natural phenomena", a movement into "the realm of the particular and the sensible".⁸) First, anthropomorphism; then, a crude form of superior materialism; thus does Kumarappa regard this development. So let us now look more closely at the textual evidence for this movement.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, agreed by most to be the oldest Upaniṣad, introduces the symbols in question — water, food and '*prāṇa*' -- in the following manner:

There was nothing whatsoever here in the beginning. By death indeed was this covered, or by hunger, for hunger is indeed death. He created the mind, thinking 'let me have a self' (*ātman*). Then he moved about, worshipping. From him, thus worshipping, water was produced. 'Verily', he thought, 'while I was worshipping, water appeared, therefore water is called *arka* (fire).

8) Kumarappa; *op cit*, p. 4.

Water surely comes to one who thus knows the reason why water is called *arka* (fire) ⁹⁾

Indeed, the first word of this Upaniṣad is the mystic sound, "AUM", likely the most elusive and profound symbol employed by the tradition in referring to Brahman. *Chāndogya* likewise stresses the importance of this symbol, devoting much of the first chapter to its exposition. "OM", says Ranade, "is described unanimously in the Upaniṣads . . . as not merely the supreme means of meditation, but the goal to be reached by the meditation itself. The Om occupies in Indian philosophy the same position which the Logos occupies in Christology".¹⁰⁾ But, without entering discussion of this beginning, and returning to the words I have quoted, the catalogue of names for Brahman as they appear in order could be listed as follows:

- (i) 'nothing' (*naiveha*)
- (ii) 'death' (*mṛtyu*), which is equated with 'hunger' (*aśanāyā*)
- (iii) *ātman*, which is linked with 'mind' (*manas*)
- (iv) 'water' (*āpas*), followed by other such concrete symbols, including 'speech' (*vāc*; 1:2:4) and 'life-giving breath' (*prāṇa*; 1:2:6).

To this list might be added the symbol of 'food' (*ānna*), about which I will speak further in a moment, as here by implication, since a necessary part of the meaning of the symbol 'hunger'. Throughout this early section of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, Brahman is personified as he who eats whatever he creates — that is, as that from which all comes forth, and to which, in every sense, all returns. Now this list may be explained in the following way.

'Nothing' is here indicated to mean 'no-thing' or 'non-being' (*mṛtyu*), in the sense of 'the non-manifest'; and this is equated with 'a craving for some lack' (*aśanāyā*). This latter could be a symbol for "that which led the unmanifest to make manifest (create)", but I think it more likely to mean the form taken by the Unmanifest in the world, through which its self-revelation is affected. It would in this case mean, 'a craving for non-being (negation of ego-assertion)'; that is, indicate and explain the innate yearning for betterment, or that which Gabriel Marcel has well called — "ontological exigence".¹¹⁾ "The world",

9) *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*; Radhakrishnan; op cit; 1:2:1.

10) R. D. Ranade; op cit; p. 333.

11) G. Marcel; *The Mystery of Being*; Vol. 2, ch. 3.

says *Maitrī* 6:12, “was fashioned by Brahman with a desire for food”.

As might be expected, the next name to appear in the sequence is a general symbol in terms of which Brahman can be linked with the referent of individual (or, ego) — language — namely, the symbol of such universal-linkage application, *ātman*. ‘*Ātman*’ is stressed as serving this function, as being a verbal device whose purpose in the teaching is, in part, to perform this universal-linkage operation, through being affirmed a possible name only when it is also possible to speak of ‘*manas*’ or ‘individual mind’. That is, talk of ‘*ātman*’ amounts, in some way, to talk of ‘the inner man’. What precisely is this “way”, the Upa-*niṣads* will of course proceed to explain.

Only *now*, having secured the possibility of talking about, by introducing a language especially for, ‘things manifest’, are the *specific* symbols of ‘water’, ‘fire’, ‘speech’ and ‘*prāṇa*’ introduced. There seems to me, therefore, no scriptural sanction to affirm these latter as some kind of crude beginnings from which the earlier members of our list were supposed to have emerged; if anything, the latter, it would seem, were produced, in a manner most profound, from understood expression of the former, which, from the very beginning, were the deliverances of *sruti*.

There are of course passages in which ‘*āpas*’, ‘*ānna*’ and ‘*prāṇa*’ appear, on their own, as symbols for the First Principle, and source of all. ‘*Prāṇa*’ appears in this guise throughout the scriptures (instance, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 6: 1:7-12; *Chāndogya* 5:1:6-15; *Prasna* 2: 3: 4); whilst *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* 5:1 remarks, “in the beginning this universe was just water. That water produced the true (*satyam*); Brahman is the true.” And in *Taittirīya* we find, “From food, verily, are produced whatsoever creatures dwell on the earth. Moreover, by food alone they live. And then also into it they pass at the end. Food, verily, is the eldest born of beings . . . Verily, those who worship Brahman as food obtain all food.” 12)

But, there is, first of all, as little to suggest that *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*; 5:1 is an early passage, removed to a later place in some later recension, as there is to suggest that *Taittirīya* is, in any sense, witness to an early shape of the teaching. In each case, the utterance belongs, if anywhere to a later rather than earlier place in the teaching. Secondly, if any

12) *Taittirīya*; 2: 2: 1, Radhakrishnan; op cit: cf. *Taittirīya* 3: 6-3: 10; *Maitrī* 6: 11-12.

commonplace symbols were sought to convey the teaching that Brahman is 'the source of absolute dependence', that is, 'the ground of all Being', none could be more natural than the three mentioned above. Such remains as true today as then, and whilst this may relate to the referent of these symbols being "absolutely essential to human life", it has no bearing whatever on any development in "philosophical thought". These concrete symbols are merely one set of counters (there are others) used to express the ever-recurring theme — that, to talk of 'Brahman' is to talk of '*that from which all comes, upon which all depends, and to which all returns*'. And this theme, which sounds eternal, occurs, whether the symbols expressing it are these concrete ones, or the vaunted ones of "abstract thought". Since, therefore, the teaching they seek to impart is the same teaching in each case, there can be little reason to elevate one above the other, and hence little reason to regard one set as historically prior to the other. In each case, the message conveyed carries the same 'depth of soul'.

V

Finally, the claims made for a second transition — from the use of nature symbols to the use of space (*ākāśa*) in referring to *Brahman* — seem to me no better. "When", remarks Kumarappa, "we pass to a comparatively universal and omnipresent element such as Space as the First Principle, we seem for the first time to pass to the level of abstract thought which has succeeded in dissociating itself from the sensible and the anthropomorphic".¹³⁾ But even the passage used to support this statement seems alien to its intent — *Chāndogya* 1: 9:1, which says,

What is the goal of this world? He (the sage) replied, 'Space, for all these creatures are produced from space. They return back into space. For space is greater than these. Space is the final goal.'¹⁴⁾

And these words are strikingly similar to those used of 'wind' or 'breath' (*prāṇa*) in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*.¹⁵⁾ "Food", says Buitenen, in a summary of certain Upaniṣadic doctrine, "is the *ātman*'s form, for the personal *ātman*, which is *prāṇa*, consists in food. Without it the sensory functions of the *ātman* cannot operate; with it, they thrive. Of

13) Kumarappa; op cit; p. 6.

14) *Chāndogya*; 1:9:1; Radhakrishnan.

15) Instance *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*; 6:1:7-12.

Brahman's two forms, non-time and time, the time form, too, is a completion of Brahman. This is the Year through which food grows and the creatures originate, live and return. Year is *Prajapati* who is Time — food is the nest of Brahman, its self." 16) In other words, 'ānna' is but another symbol used to indicate the referent of talk about Brahman to be 'the Ultimate Explanation' or 'source of Absolute Dependence' of all that is. All that exists is sustained by, takes shape, and exists solely because of, both 'ānna' and 'prāṇa' which persist through and are nourished by Time, and which are "the nest of Brahman, its self". And this differs in no important way from the manner in which the symbol of space (*ākāśa*) is used in *Chāndogya*. I find therefore no grounds to conclude these—the nature symbols and the symbol of *ākāśa*—to be other than two different ways of effecting the teaching, and of indicating the referent of person-talk to be—the *ultimate source of absolute dependence*. I see here no evidence whatever of a "first time" move to be vaunted "level of abstract thought".

VI

Much, then, of the form-critical method here employed seems based on the unquestioned acceptance of what I have termed—'the myth of progress'. The critical device of dating a piece of literature according to 'depth of soul' expressed in its theory rests squarely on two assumptions: (a) that we, in the twentieth Christian century of the Western world, know what 'depth of soul' amounts to: (b) that the understanding of man is like a machine which develops at a uniform rate through history. Little evidence supports either assumption. Our world seems to many, peopled by fewer men of wisdom and good-will today, than in many a prior age.

In commenting on the form-critical approach to the dating of Upaniṣadic literature, R. D. Ranade's opinions well reflect my own. He advances five criteria upon which such criticism has proceeded, only one of which does he find of significant value. He speaks first of criticism based on language, style, grammar and vocabulary, which he argues to be virtually valueless. No *a priori* rule can be set for what style, manner of language, etc., any particular author or redactor *must* have used. Of the traditional criterion, endorsed by Deussen, that prose

16) J. A. B. Van Buitenen; *The Maitrayaniya Upaniṣad*; pp. 65-69. See also *Taittirīya* 2: 2: 1; 3: 6-3: 10; *Maitri* 6: 11-12.

works are old and works in verse, more recent, he remarks — “This is a gratuitous assumption which, in the light of modern criticism, does not seem to hold much water”.¹⁷⁾ Thirdly, conclusions based on elaboration of detail within the documents, he also dismisses as of limited use; for once more, no *a priori* judgment can be established. The question of ideological development, the criterion against a particular case of which we have argued, is likewise dismissed as of little substance. There is, for instance, absolutely no reason to believe that fundamental doctrine *must* appear later rather than sooner. Finally, the quoting of one Upaniṣad by another is, he correctly notes, “the only test which may be regarded as being absolutely definite”.¹⁸⁾ “But this test can have no universal significance, because we find only few definite interquotations among the Upanishads.”¹⁹⁾ Hence, very little grounds exist for dogmatism in form-criticism of these, or of any, scriptures.

VII.1

But, the basic point here is the lack of justice done the logic of language sensibly employing terms about the Ultimate or Supreme Being; for if this logic is adequate, and the language successful (or correct in its claims), if, that is, the language is sensible, the doctrine conveyed by it is one incapable of development—it is *śruti*, “a divine afflatus springing from within, the result of inspiration through god-intoxication”.²⁰⁾ And if this is so, “the Vedas and the Upaniṣads must, like the basal literature of all other religions, be regarded as having been composed by seers in a state of god-intoxication.”²¹⁾ Let us now look a little more closely at this claim.

Firstly, though one cannot deny development through history of, for instance, the verbal garment of the teaching, this bears scarcely at all upon the nature of the body so clad. “For essences do not have a history. Essences do not change. Yet it is an observable and important fact that what have been called religions do, in history, change”.²²⁾ Even were

17) Ranada op cit; p. 14.

18) Ranade, op cit; p. 16

19) Ranade, op cit; p. 16.

20) Ranade; op cit; p. 9.

21) Ranade; op cit; p.10.

22) W. C. Smith; *The Meaning and End of Religion*; Toronto; 1963; p. 130.

it the case, as it seems not to be, that earlier Upaniṣads array themselves in fewer and simpler verbal-garments in talking of the Ultimate, little would thereby be shown about the message in the hearts of these early authors. What variation is to be found need be viewed as no more than a measure of the apparel thought to fit the teaching needs of any particular moment. No assumptions about what was known to the ṛṣis can be supported from the *mere* fact that different symbolic dress is used to transmit this knowledge.

And if talk of 'the Ultimate' makes sense, then that which such language is about cannot change; and if this talk is understood, such understanding cannot possibly be improved upon, or subject to any 'development' whatsoever. At best, its language of expression can alter, adjusting to the shape of changing needs. If the earliest sages were Brahman-knowers and Brahman-sayers, nothing of substance would remain to be known—or said.

VII.2

Yet this is not to repudiate philosophy. The work of the minds of men upon *śruti* can lead to more or less adequate thought systems based thereon; and it is perfectly proper to *talk* of "development" here. Though, whether any particular claims made *about* this supposed "development" are true (or not) is quite another matter. But such talk does highlight the danger of philosophy usurping the provenance of religion, of the human intellect assuming the authority proper only to revealed knowledge (*śruti*). Inevitably, the human mind finds the wisdom of revelation fraught with puzzle; and inevitably, it seeks to resolve this by the drastic measure of excision—by cutting away what it does not understand. Let me illustrate the danger of such drastic measures with one example—the rise of *Sāṃkhya*. It could, I think, be argued—though with what force I am not sure—that *Sāṃkhya* began as a mis-interpretation of the Upaniṣadic doctrines of 'ātman' and 'māyā', the former becoming the doctrine of 'multiple *puruṣas*', and the latter, that of *Prakṛti* (as created nature), equal in metaphysical status to such '*puruṣas*'. In *Sāṃkhya*, "matter", says Deussen, "is as truly real as the soul, and therefore cannot be recognized by the latter as illusion, as in the Vedānta".²³)

23) Paul Deussen : *The Philosophy of the Upanishads*; Edinburgh; 1906; p. 254.

Here, as so often elsewhere, when reason ousts revelation, the tendency to objectify takes charge. For with *Sāṃkhya*, it could be argued that two things have happened to Upaniṣadic tradition, both of which are an effort to think as objects the referents of two words, neither of which was meant to function in this way. It could, in the first place, be argued that, because 'persons' can be spoken of as if they were individual things having observable boundaries, because, that is, the word 'person' has a plural sense, that to which '*ātman*' refers is, by *Sāṃkhya*, thought of as, and hence reduced to, one among many individual observable *puruṣas* (persons). Secondly, it is reasonable to suggest that, because the observable world of individual things (of objects having seeable, hearable, feelable (etc.) boundaries) can be spoken of as if it were real, and because '*māyā*' is a word which often appears to refer to this world,²⁴) *this* referent (the observable world of individual things), *Sāṃkhya* has concluded, has a ontic status equal to the above *puruṣas*. The chief (perhaps, only) difference between the objects we observe (i.e. the world of *māyā*), and persons (*puruṣas*) is that the former alter, whereas the latter do not. Finally, because nothing can be thought of as real apart from persons and things, apart from *puruṣas* and the world of *māyā*, apart, that is, from *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* taken together, there can be no place for a further Deity.

Assuming this interpretation, it is easy to see that *Sāṃkhya*, in, I am suggesting, its eagerness to make all things thinkable as objects, leaves out three fundamental elements of Upaniṣadic teaching, the tradition from which it comes: and it leaves them out, not because it has overlooked them, but because, having (on what grounds I cannot imagine) decided the workings of human reason must be superior to the workings of revelation, it is therefore convinced that much of the deliverances of revelation must be dismissed or cut-away because the intellect, or the human mind, cannot, of itself, accomodate them with at least some of its own deliverances. And the three abandoned elements of which I have spoken as fundamental to Upaniṣadic teaching are these:

(i) That *ātman* is a word used to refer to something about the fact that the Ultimate (Brahman) is linked in a special way with beings who can, on certain occasions, be thought of as things among other things; and that *puruṣa* is at least a word used to stress that these beings

24) I mean *māyā*, as a synonym for *Prakṛti*, used to refer to the created world, and *not*, as it sometimes does, to the power which creates the natural world.

are subjects, *not* objects—that they are *persons*, not things. The something about the above linkage-fact to which *ātman* is meant to refer is that the subjectivity which these beings are is none other *than* Brahman.

(ii) That speaking of *Prakṛti* as ‘real’ is merely a manner of communicating a lesser understanding of ‘how things are’.

(iii) That *tad ekam* (‘that One’) is a deliverance of revelation which includes yet goes beyond, both the subjectivity of *ātman*, thought of as *puruṣa*, and the objectivity of *māyā*, thought of as *prakṛti*.

If I am right, here, as so often elsewhere, discursive reasoning, by which I mean the human mind when left to itself, has entered merely to objectify utterances meant only to serve as myth; to make ‘things’ of supposed referents of notions which serve in the myth to voice some element of *śruti*. Here, as so often elsewhere, things of the mind have overcome those of the heart, in the passion *manas* so often shows for partial glimpses of the truth. “As part of the Veda, the Upanishads belong to *śruti* or revealed literature. They are immortal *sanātana*, timeless. Their truths are said to be breathed out by God or visioned by the seers. They are the utterances of sages who speak out of the fullness of their illumined experience.”²⁵) In other words, the Upaniṣads seek, not to convince the mind so much as to touch the heart, and are meant to awaken within the reader or pupil recognition of the *Ātman : Brahman* equation, which is the heart of *śruti*. They do, indeed, lay no more claim to systematic philosophy than does the New Testament to organized Dogmatics. They, no more than any scripture, seek to satisfy the intellect with logics invented or uncovered by the minds of men. And that they do, so far as they do, satisfy the mind, is not because they are doing philosophy—never mind doing it successfully—but because, what they *are* doing, in so far as they are successful, satisfies the person as a whole. The Upaniṣads, in common with all religious scriptures, are an effort, not to make people better thinkers, but to make people better: and if we have understood that difference, then, I suspect, we have understood, or at least begun to understand, the difference between philosophy and religion.

Perhaps being religious sometimes involves doing philosophy: it may even always involve this, though I doubt it. But certainly, one is no more the same as the other, than thinking well is the same as being well.

25) Radhakrishnan; *The Principal Upanishads*; p. 22.

DAS PRINZIP DES VERSTEHENS BEI JOACHIM WACH

VON

HANS-JOACHIM KLIMKEIT

Bonn

Joachim Wach umreißt den Aufgabenkreis der Religionswissenschaft in seinem Frühwerk „Religionswissenschaft: Prolegomena zu ihrer wissenschaftstheoretischen Grundlegung“, ¹⁾ mit folgenden Worten: „Den Gegenstand der Religionswissenschaft bildet die Mannigfaltigkeit der empirischen Religionen. Sie gilt es zu erforschen, zu *verstehen* und darzustellen.“ (RW 21). In seiner Suche nach methodischer Klarheit um die Möglichkeiten, Voraussetzungen und Bedingungen sinnvoller religionswissenschaftlicher Arbeit wird er immer wieder auf das Problem der Hermeneutik zurückgeworfen. Seine gesamte Lebensarbeit ist gleichsam eine Suche nach dem rechten wissenschaftlichen Ort, der ein Verstehen fremder Religionen und ihrer Erscheinungen begründet und ermöglicht.

1) Im Folgenden werden diese Abkürzungen verwandt:

1. *Wach-Werke:*

- RW Religionswissenschaft: Prolegomena zu ihrer wissenschaftstheoretischen Grundlegung. Leipzig 1924.
I, II, bzw. III Das Verstehen: Grundzüge einer Geschichte der hermeneutischen Theorie im 19. Jh. 3 Bde., Tübingen 1926, 1929 und 1933.
Types Types of Religious Experience: Christian and Non-Christian. London 1951.
CS The Comparative Study of Religions, (ed. J. Kitagawa). New York 1958.

2. *Wach-Aufsätze:*

- ZM Zur Methodologie der allgemeinen Religionswissenschaft, ZMR 1923, 33 ff.
ZP Bemerkungen zum Problem der „externen“ Würdigung der Religion, ZMR 1923, 161 ff.
ZH Zur Hermeneutik heiliger Schriften, Theol. Studien und Kritiken 102 (1930), 280 ff.
WD Wilhelm Dilthey über 'Das Problem der Religion', ZMR 1925, 66 ff.
SA Sinn und Aufgabe der Religionswissenschaft, ZMR 1935, 131 ff.
RGG² Verstehen, in: RGG², Bd. V.
OU On Understanding, in: The Albert Schweitzer Jubilee Book, ed. A. A. Roback. Cambridge, Mass. 1945, 133 ff.

Die äußeren Lebensstadien Wachs sind schnell genannt. Geboren wurde er 1898 in Chemnitz als ein Urenkel des berühmten Komponisten Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. Nach dem Abitur, das er in Dresden ablegte, und einer an der Ostfront verbrachten Offizierszeit am Ende des 1. Weltkrieges studierte er Religionswissenschaft, Orientalistik, Philosophie und Theologie in München, Berlin und Leipzig, wo er 1922 promoviert wurde, sich zwei Jahre später habilitierte und 1929 eine außerordentliche Professur für Religionswissenschaft erhielt. Als er 1935 seiner jüdischen Abstammung wegen seines Amtes enthoben wurde, folgte er einem Ruf an die Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island (USA). Dort lehrte er zehn Jahre lang, bis er nach Chicago berufen wurde, wo er bis zu seinem allzu frühen Tode im Jahre 1955 wirkte.

Die Vielseitigkeit dieser Denkerpersönlichkeit spüren wir in Wach's immer neuen Überlegungen zur Hermeneutik. Die Quellen, die uns über seine Gedanken zur Verstehenslehre Aufschluß geben, sind reich und vielfältig. Neben eine Anzahl von Aufsätzen in deutscher und englischer Sprache treten vor allem zwei Werke, die der Erhellung der hermeneutischen Frage gewidmet sind: die schon erwähnte Studie „Religionswissenschaft“ und das dreibändige Hauptwerk „Das Verstehen: Grundzüge einer Geschichte der hermeneutischen Theorie im 19. Jahrhundert“. Vor allem in der Einleitung zum 2. Band bringt Wach seine eigenen Gedanken zum Verstehensproblem zum Ausdruck.

Es fällt auf, daß der dritte Band dieses Geschichtswerkes mit der Darstellung der philologischen und archäologischen Hermeneutik geradezu abrupt abbricht. Wach zieht aus dem umfangreichen, in vielen Jahren mühevoller Arbeit gesammelten Material keine Konsequenzen für eine eigene Verstehenslehre, obwohl es gerade der Sinn dieser Studie gewesen war, einen festen und bleibenden religionswissenschaftlich-hermeneutischen Ertrag aus ihr zu gewinnen. Ein Aufsatz (SA) aus dem Jahre 1935 deutet einige Konsequenzen nur an, und nach seiner Übersiedlung in die Vereinigten Staaten wendet sich Wach plötzlich ganz anderen Fragen zu. Zwar kreisen seine Gedanken noch immer um das Verstehensproblem, doch verfaßt er keine größeren Werke mehr, die diesem Komplex gewidmet sind. Man hat gemeint, Wach sei irgendwie in den Grunderwägungen seiner Hermeneutik steckengeblieben. Sicherlich ist daran etwas Richtiges. Sicherlich gilt ferner für Wachs historische Arbeit an der Hermeneutik und ihrer

Entwicklung — spricht er doch von hrer 'Eigenbewegung', — was er vom historischen Schaffen seines großen Vorbildes Dilthey sagt, wenn er von der Tragik spricht, die jenem eigen sei. Es sei die Tragik, „von der flutenden Fülle der historischen Gesichte, von dem Strom der Wirklichkeit, die Pfähle immer wieder herausgerissen zu sehen, die der systematische Drang seines Denkens immer wieder einzurammen suchte.“ (WD 67).

Man wird allerdings sehen müssen, daß Wach in seiner späteren Zuwendung zur religionssoziologischen und religionspsychologischen Typologie gerade jene liegengebliebenen hermeneutischen Fäden wiederaufnehmen will. Die enge Verbindung zwischen Hermeneutik und Typologie soll zum Schluß zur Sprache kommen. Hingewiesen sei hier aber schon auf den bezeichnenden Titel eines bedeutsamen Spätwerkes, einer Aufsatzsammlung, „Types of Religious Experience: Christian and Non-Christian“. So wird man auf Grund einer Analyse seines Gesamtwirkens feststellen müssen, daß der Bruch, der zweifellos zwischen den deutschen und den englischen Schriften liegt, das Verstehensproblem nicht in dem Maße berührt, wie es zunächst äußerlich erscheint. Sagt Wach doch selbst von seiner eigenen Lebensarbeit einige Jahre vor seinem Tode: „...the author feels that the studies which he has carried on in the last decades have *all* been directed toward *one* goal: the deeper *understanding* of the religious heritage of West and East ...“ (Types, xi).

Für unser Thema bedeutet das fortgesetzte Bemühen Wachs um die Verstehensfrage, daß wir uns dem Kern seines Denkens von zwei Sprachen her nähern können. Dieser Umstand wird uns nicht unwichtige Rückschlüsse auf die Problematik gestatten.

Das Problem, um das es Wach letztlich bei aller Bemühung um die Klärung methodischer Voraussetzungen geht, ist also das der Möglichkeiten und Bedingungen des religionswissenschaftlichen Verstehens. Wo angesichts der Fülle und Eigenart des Stoffes „qualitativ und quantitativ“ die Grenzen liegen, das ist für ihn die Kernfrage. „Ist es überhaupt möglich,“ fragt er, „von einem Standpunkt außerhalb ihrer eine Religion zu erforschen und zu bearbeiten? Kann sich ihr Wesen überhaupt dem erschließen, der ihr nicht selbst angehört? ... Kann und darf ein islamischer Gelehrter es wagen, die christliche Religion zum Gegenstand wissenschaftlicher Betrachtung zu machen, hat ein christlicher Forscher die Berechtigung, mit Zuversicht

an die Erforschung der indischen Religionen heranzutreten? Und wenn überhaupt, wie weit darf er hoffen, diesen fremden Erscheinungen gerecht zu werden?" (RW 138).

Die Frage spitzt sich nun noch weiter zu. Gesetzt nämlich, wir kämen aus stichhaltigen Gründen zur Annahme der Möglichkeit einer solchen „externen“ Erforschung, wäre es dann nicht naheliegend, weitergehend zu fragen, „ob nicht vielleicht dieser, der externe, nicht nur ein möglicher, sondern der einzig mögliche Standpunkt sei“, d.h. daß nur, wer von außen an sie herantrete, die nötigen Voraussetzungen zur objektiven Erforschung einer Religion mitbringe? (RW 138).

Wachs Antwort ist zunächst keine Lehre, erst recht kein System, sondern ein umfassendes Programm. Zu diesem Programm gehört in erster Linie die von ihm selbst in Angriff genommene Untersuchung hermeneutischer Theorien in den verschiedenen Geisteswissenschaften, vor allem in Theologie und Historik. Nicht eine Analyse des „reinen Wesens Verstehen“ soll also die grundsätzlichen Kategorien einer religionswissenschaftlichen Verstehenslehre liefern, sondern das Studium hermeneutischer Ansätze von Denkern, die selbst mitten in der empirischen Forschung stehen und von daher gezwungen sind, sich mit weiterführenden Fragen der Auslegung auseinanderzusetzen. (RW 31). Gerade aus diesen über die Sache und ihre immanente Logik hinausgehenden Grundsatzbetrachtungen großer Forscher möchte er Wesentliches für die Verstehenstheorie lernen. „Wir glauben nicht“, hebt er hervor, „daß es möglich wäre, über das Verstehen Wesentliches zu sagen, wenn man nicht weiß, erstens wie es geübt worden ist, zweitens aber wie man über seine Natur und seine Aufgaben, seine Bedingungen und seine Grenzen gedacht hat.“ (I, 10). „Um das im vollen Sinne zu erkennen, muß man auf die großen Leistungen blicken, in denen der menschliche Geist um ein Verständnis gerungen hat, ... aber man muß zugleich achten auf die Gedanken, die von den Meistern des Verstehens ausgesprochen worden sind über die Natur dieses Verhaltens ... Das sind die Bausteine für eine systematische Theorie des Verstehens.“ (I, 11).

Die aus der Geschichte der Hermeneutik zu gewinnende Verstehenslehre soll in Wachs Programm ergänzt werden durch eine Theorie der religiösen Ausdrucksarten. Zu dieser „religiösen Ausdruckskunde“ oder „Grammatik der religiösen Sprache“ gehört die Sinndeutung der Wortausdrucks, des Symbols, des Mythos, usw. Diese Theorie soll Erkennt-

nisse über die „Denkarten, Fühlweisen und Werthaltungen“ (II, 8) in Ost und West zu einem umfassenden System verarbeiten.

Ferner fordert Wach eine Erschließung all jener Kategorien, die den Bezug zwischen Subjekt und Objekt im Verstehensprozeß tangieren. Hier gilt es zunächst, „die Maßstäbe kennenzulernen, die wir gleichsam unbewußt als Kinder unserer Zeit, als Glieder unserer Generation, an die Welt und also auch an die Geschichte heranbringen.“ (RW 142). Dann kommt es darauf an, die zeitlichen, räumlichen und kulturellen Bedingtheiten zu erarbeiten, die dem fremden religiösen Leben und seinem Ausdruck anhaften. Schließlich soll das Verhältnis zwischen beiden Welten — der des Subjekts und des Objekts — geprüft und die Kategorien aufgestellt werden, in denen diese Milieu- oder Situationsunterschiede liegen. Das soll endlich zu einer umfassenden Theorie führen. Die große Bedeutung einer solchen Theorie würde in der Korrektur liegen, die sie an dem Verstehensvorgang herbeiführen würde.

Schließlich verlangt Wach einen vierten theoretischen Rahmen für ein angemessenes Verstehen fremder religiöser Erscheinungen, nämlich eine „formale Religionssystematik“, die über eine Religionsmorphologie und -phänomenologie abstraktionsmäßig noch weit hinausgeht. Dazu heißt es: „Ich suche das Gemeinsame aus den mir bekannten Theologien, suche das Prinzip, nach dem sie alle gebildet und organisiert sind, suche das Identische in den Formen und im Charakter, das ‘Gerüst’ herauszuarbeiten. Ich vergleiche und suche so eine oberste Klasse von religionswissenschaftlichen Begriffen zu gewinnen.“ (RW 177). Wenn diese Oberbegriffe auch verhältnismäßig inhaltslos und nichtssagend sind, so verspricht sich Wach doch von ihrer Anwendung eine Erleichterung der historischen Verstehensarbeit.

Es ist also ein geradezu kühnes Programm, das der junge Wach fordert. Wenn er es auch selbst zum Teil schon in Angriff nimmt, so muß er doch feststellen, daß es eine Aufgabe der Zukunft sein müsse, die noch zu gewinnenden Ergebnisse all dieser Anregungen zu einem geschlossenen verstehenstheoretischen System zu verschmelzen. (RW 164).

Über den eben skizzierten Entwurf hinaus formuliert Wach aber auch konkrete hermeneutische Leitlinien und Grundsätze, die für das religionswissenschaftliche Verstehen richtungsweisend sein wollen und Gültigkeit beanspruchen. Diese Prinzipien ergeben sich nicht — wie

wir schon andeuteten — als systematische Konsequenz aus der groß-angelegten hermeneutikgeschichtlichen Untersuchung, sondern als Nebenprodukte verschiedenster historischer und phänomenologischer Arbeiten. So finden wir sie auch in seinem gesamten Schrifttum verstreut, und es gilt hier, diese recht disparaten und z.T. fragmentarischen Gedanken zu einem einigermaßen kohärenten Bild zusammenzufassen.

Zunächst bedarf der Begriff des *Verstehens* der Erörterung. Wach grenzt diesen Ausdruck vom *Deuten* einerseits und vom *Auslegen* oder *Interpretieren* andererseits ab. (Im Englischen werden diese Unterscheidungen allerdings nicht weiter durchgeführt; *understanding* und *interpreting* erscheinen fast synonym, dafür hebt er dort das *partial understanding* vom *integral understanding* oder *comprehending* ab. Daneben tritt ferner der Begriff *appreciation*, der als *Würdigung* auch schon im deutschen Schrifttum zu finden ist.)

Unter *Deuten* versteht nun Wach die Betrachtung und Erklärung „von einem gegebenen System aus, in dem und nach dem das Gegebene zu fassen gesucht wird.“ (II, 9). Die Deutung kennt auch dann schon eine „systematische Ordnung“, wenn sie aus einer verabsolutierten „individuellen ... Betrachtung heraus“ erwächst. (II, 13).

Diese Grundbedingung ist auch dem *Verstehen* eigen, aber für das Verstehen ist darüber hinaus kennzeichnend, daß es sich seiner Bedingtheit bewußt wird und sie „nach Möglichkeit zu kontrollieren und zu eliminieren sucht“. Nicht der Gegensatz von Willkür und Unfehlbarkeit kennzeichnet also den Unterschied von Deuten und Verstehen, sondern das Bemühen seitens des Verstehenden, den subjektiven Faktor einer umfassenden Kontrolle zu unterwerfen, ihn in das kritische und methodische Bewußtsein zu heben und ihn damit zu legitimieren. (II, 11; ZM 47). Das Ziel des Verstehens ist eine „*relative Objektivität*“. „Verstehen im Gegensatz zum Deuten ist dadurch charakterisiert, daß auf Grund des Wissens um die Bedingtheit versucht wird, sie zu überwinden, zu neutralisieren jedenfalls.“ (II, 9 f.).

Die *Auslegung* oder *Interpretation* schließlich ist der umfassendere Ausdruck, der das Verstehen in sich begreift. Auslegung ist „das an Regeln gebundene Verstehen und Verständlichmachen von dauernd fixierten Lebensäußerungen“ (I, 5), also das methodisch geregelte Verfahren des Verstehens (II, 14). Es gibt keine Auslegung von Personen, Lebenszusammenhängen oder gar vom Dasein selbst, denn diese werden allenfalls gedeutet. Die Auslegung bezieht sich nur auf

den konkreten und fixierten Ausdruck, zu dem der Interpret immer wieder zurückkehren kann und um der Korrektur seiner Ergebnisse willen zurückkehren muß.

Nach dieser begrifflichen Erörterung fragen wir nun nach den Voraussetzungen des Verstehens. Wach teilt sehr früh schon mit Spranger die Einsicht, daß es ein voraussetzungsloses wissenschaftliches Verstehen nicht gibt. Wir fragen zunächst nach den subjektiven Vorbedingungen.

In seinem Spätwerk, "The Comparative Study of Religions", (New York 1958), (abgekürzt CS), faßt Wach diese Bedingungen (*conditions*) folgendermaßen zusammen: 1. möglichst umfassende Information, 2. der Wille zum Verstehen, 3. „eine angemessene gefühlsmäßige Vorbedingung“ (*an adequate emotional condition*), und 4. Erfahrung (*experience*). Hier müssen wir zunächst einhalten und fragen, was denn unter „an adequate emotional condition“ zu verstehen sei und was er ferner mit „experience“ meint.

Zur Erklärung der genannten „gefühlsmäßigen Vorbedingung“ expliziert Wach, die verlangte Haltung sei „not indifference, . . . but rather an engagement of feeling, interest, metexis, or participation.“ Auf diesen Ausdruck der „Teilhabe“ (participation) kommen wir sogleich zurück. Zunächst noch einige ergänzende Worte aus dem deutschen Schrifttum. Unser Autor spricht angesichts der Gefahr einer Rationalisierung des religiösen Ausdrucksgehalts von der Notwendigkeit, mit der „Totalität des Gemütes“ (Dilthey) verstehend aufzunehmen. Der „ganze Mensch“ sei im Forschenden angesprochen und müsse reagieren. (SA 142). Nur so sei gewährleistet, daß auch „der Sinn für die Natur und Eigenart der zu behandelnden Gegenstände“ (ZM 36), also der Sinn für das spezifisch Religiöse, erschöpfend in den Verstehensprozeß hineingenommen werde. Er leugnet, daß es den „religiös Unmusikalischen“ gibt, wie Max Weber sich selbst nennt. Das Äußerste, was wir allerdings über diesen „religiösen Sinn“ als eine hermeneutische Vorbedingung erfahren, ist daß es sich um „eine psychologisch und erkenntnistheoretisch ungemein schwer faßbare Kategorie“ handle, „von der aber jedenfalls ausgesagt werden kann, daß sie eine Art Struktur-Apriori darstellt.“ (SA 165).

Der Begriff „experience“, nun, umfaßt sicherlich mehr als nur religiöse Erfahrung. So heißt es: „We would like to define experience in the broadest sense . . . In all likelihood there is no contact with any

aspect of life which would not bear upon the problem of understanding another's religion." (CS 13).

Jeder Er-Lebens-Bereich — man denke an den Diltheyschen Erlebnissbegriff — hat also einen Bezug zum Verstehen fremder Religionen. Somit kann Wach sagen: „Verstehen ist ein Wiedererkennen." (II, 16).

Neben den subjektiven Bedingungen gehören für Wach auch gewisse „metaphysische Voraussetzungen" zum angemessenen religionswissenschaftlichen Verstehen. „Jede Hermeneutik", betont er, „die über den Rahmen einer methodischen Kunstlehre hinausgeht, wird in bestimmten metaphysischen Überzeugungen gründen." Die „metaphysische" Basis seiner eigenen Verstehensprinzipien ist die Idee der „Teilhabe auf Grund der Wesensgemeinschaft", die Idee der „Geistesverwandtschaft" oder „Kongenialität". „Weil wir am fremden Leben teilhaben, vermögen wir es . . . samt seinen Äußerungen bis zu einem noch aufzuklärenden Grade irgendwie zu verstehen." (RGG²).

Diese Theorie von der „Geistesverwandtschaft", die auch soziologisch und später sogar ontologisch begründet wird, stellt sicherlich den problematischten und schwierigsten Punkt in Wachs Hermeneutik dar, zumal seine Äußerungen zu diesem Thema kaum alle auf einen Nenner gebracht werden können. Der jüngere Wach hatte den Gedanken von der Kongenialität als der Grundlage des Verstehens noch verworfen und allein von „Affinität zum Objekt" gesprochen. Diese „Affinität" ist zunächst ein „Interesse" an der Sache, dann aber auch ein „persönliches Verhältnis", sogar eine „innere Verwandtschaft" zum Objekt. (Im Englischen spricht er abschwächend von einer „resemblance between the knower and the known"). (Types 18). Wir fragen, was für eine „innere Verwandtschaft" — oder „resemblance" — ist das und worin ist sie begründet? Hier antwortet Wach mit dem Begriff des „Ewig-Menschlichen", das vor allem in der Dichtung und in der Kunst erfaßt sei. Es ist etwas Anlagemäßiges, nicht unbedingt mit dem Allgemeinen Menschlichen Gleichzusetzendes, denn für die Verstehensarbeit ist gerade menschliche, geistige Eigenart, Charakter notwendig. Nicht die radikale Auslöschung der Individualität, die Aufhebung des Unterschiedes zwischen Subjekt und Objekt begründet und ermöglicht wahres Verstehen, sondern menschliche Eigenheit, letztlich individuelle Existenz; „es ist notwendig etwas zu sein, wenn man 'verstehen' will: in je tieferem, umfassenderem Sinne man Mensch ist, umso tiefer und umfassender versteht man." (RW 153). Es ergibt sich also das hermeneutische

Prinzip, daß wir weder das vollkommen Ähnliche noch das total Andere, das Nichtmenschliche, zu verstehen vermögen; „understanding can only apply to an intermediate field, lying between what is wholly similar and wholly dissimilar to our nature.” (OU 134).

Das Problem des Verstehens gliedert sich für Wach in zwei Bereiche: Individual- und Sachverstehen, Verstehen der Frömmigkeit und ihres Ausdruck, des „fremden Du“ und der „Objektivationen“. Die große Aufgabe, fremde Individualität zu verstehen, die aller geisteswissenschaftlichen, vor allem aller biographischen Arbeit gestellt ist, enthält eine eigentümliche Schwierigkeit, nämlich die grundsätzliche Unauserschöpflichkeit und Unfaßbarkeit der Persönlichkeit, den irrationalen Charakter des Individuellen. Wach kommt im Laufe seiner Arbeit immer tiefer zur Erkenntnis, daß Person- oder Seelverstehen letztlich nur möglich ist durch das Verstehen konkreter „Objektivationen“. Wie das Interpretieren kann sich auch das Verstehen nur auf konkrete Sinnäußerungen und Lebensausdrücke beziehen. „Wir verstehen weder Gott, noch das Leben, noch die Welt, noch einen Menschen, wir erfassen sie niemals“ (II, 14). Die Grenzen des endlichen Sinns sind auch die Grenzen des Verstehens. Für das Personverstehen heißt das: „The religious experience of another person can never become the object of direct observation.” (Types 34). Somit rückt das Frömmigkeits- oder Seelverstehen in den Hintergrund. In dem gleichen Maße gewinnt aber das Verstehen der „Objektivationen“ um so größere Bedeutung. Der Geist (eines Einzelnen, einer Gruppe oder einer Religionsgemeinschaft) manifestiert sich gerade in solchen „Objektivationen“. Diese sind „Ausdrucksformen“, die man verstehen kann, weil sie einen „Hindeutungswert“ besitzen und eine „Struktur“ aufweisen, die erkennbar und beschreibbar ist. Religionswissenschaftliches Verstehen ist somit für Wach — im Anschluß an Dilthey — in erster Linie Ausdrucksverstehen — und somit auch Symbolverstehen. Von daher kommt der von Wach geforderten Theorie des Ausdrucks, die wir anfangs erwähnten, besondere Bedeutung zu. Der Ausdruck ist das Medium, durch das gebrochen dem Erkennenden Erlebnisse, speziell religiöse Erlebnisse, greifbar werden. (ZM 37). Hier muß die eigentliche Kunst des Verstehens einsetzen.

Ausdrucksbedeutung besitzen die einzelnen religiösen „Formkreise“ wie Mythos, Dogma, Kultus, Gemeindeordnung. Aber bedeutungsmäßig aufschlußreich ist vor allem der Charakter dieser einzelnen Formkreise.

„Wie gebetet wird, wie geopfert wird, wie man sich Gott vorstellt, wie die Weihen geartet sind, in denen man initiiert wird: darin und in vielem anderen äußert sich der Geist einer Religion, daraus muß man ihn zu fassen suchen“. (RW 161).

Damit sind wir nun beim Kern der von Wach geforderten Verstehensprinzipien. Der Religionswissenschaftler muß, so hebt er hervor, nicht nur auf die Herausstellung der historischen Entwicklung hinarbeiten, sondern auch auf das „Verstehen des *Geistes* der Ausdrucksgesamtheit“ und die „Erkenntnis der *Idee*“, die „das Treibende im Ganzen“ ist. (RW 54). Die Frage nach dem *Geist* der Gesamtheit und der *Idee* des Ganzen wird meist nicht weiter unterschieden. Wach spricht in diesem Zusammenhang auch vom *Wesen*, vom *Kern*, vom *Zentrum* oder vom *Lebensmittelpunkt* einer Erscheinung oder einer Religion, einmal diesen, einmal jenen Ausdruck hervorhebend. Man wird hier schwerlich einen einheitlichen Sprachgebrauch feststellen können. Jedenfalls wird seine Intention deutlich, wenn er auf Rudolf Ottos Begriff vom „individuellen Sondergeist“ der Religionen verweist und Otto zustimmend zitiert, der in der Erfassung dieses Sondergeistes „das schwierigste und feinste Geschäft einer reifen wissenschaftlichen Religionspsychologie und Religionsgeschichte“ erblickte. (RW 36) (R. Otto, Vischnu-Narayana, S. 154).

Entscheidend ist nun, daß das zu erarbeitende Zentrum einer Religion oder einer religiösen Erscheinung in ihrer Äußerungs- und Ausdrucksgesamtheit wirksam ist und das Ganze trägt und beherrscht. Von dort aus ordnen sich alle Einzelzüge. Das Zentrum ist etwas Lebendiges, Organisches, das eine Eigengesetzlichkeit besitzt und den Schlüssel zum Verständnis aller Einzelzüge in sich trägt. Stößt der Forscher zum lebendigen Mittelpunkt der Erscheinung durch, so lassen sich von dort aus die noch undurchsichtigen Teilphänomene durchleuchten. Eben dieses Zentrum kann aber nur aus dem Einzelnen erarbeitet werden. So ergibt sich der typisch hermeneutische Zirkel, der seit Schleiermacher die Theoretiker der Hermeneutik beschäftigt, daß man nämlich „den Geist des Ganzen nur auf dem Umweg über die Erkenntnis der Teile fassen kann, und daß doch alles Einzelne erst voll verstanden werden kann aus dem Prinzip heraus, das von innen wirksam ist.“ (RW 49).

Somit ist im Erfassen des Wesens, oder Geistes einer religiösen Erscheinung eine „einfache Induktion“ nicht möglich; die voraus-

greifende intuitive Erfassung des Ganzen und das Verstehen der einzelnen Teile müssen sich wechselseitig ergänzen. (RW 51). Dabei wird natürlich der rein empirische Forschungsgrund überschritten. Ohne einen gewissen Sprung geht es nicht, wenn man zur Erfassung des Wesens fortschreitet. Und doch liegt in der empirischen Arbeit selbst „etwas über Hinausweisendes und Treibendes“. (RW 56). So ist diese Überschreitung notwendig, aber sie korrigiert sich auch immer wieder selbst durch die Prüfung der Ergebnisse an der Erfahrung. So ist auch der hermeneutische Zirkel nicht unbedingt ein *circulus vitiosus*. „Auch bei diesem Verfahren gibt es so etwas wie Gültigkeit, Bestätigung und Kontrolle.“ (ZM 54).

Eine andere Frage als die nach dem „Geist“ oder „Zentrum“ einer religiösen Erscheinung ist die nach ihrem „eigentlichen Sinn“. Wach verdeutlicht das Problem am Beispiel der Auslegung heiliger Schriften. Auf die Fülle der Einzelfragen, die sich hier ergeben, gehen wir nicht ein. Das entscheidende Problem ist das Verhältnis des Forschers zur Grundintention des Textes, zum „Gemeinten“. Die hermeneutische Theorie hat sich die Frage vorzulegen, welches der „eigentliche Sinn“ sei, zumal der „objektiv“ gewonnene Sinn sich nicht mit dem subjektiv „Gemeinten“ zu decken braucht.

Als Lösung fordert Wach — in offener Anlehnung an die altprotestantische Dogmatik und ihre Lehre vom Wesen der heiligen Schrift — daß die Hermeneutik des heiligen Schrifttums von dem Grundsatz einer „relativen Perspektivität“ (Bestimmtheit, Klarheit) auszugehen habe. (ZH 288). Sie hat die Aufgabe, die Möglichkeit eines Verständnisses überhaupt gegenüber der radikalen Skepsis einerseits und der rein formalistischen Behandlung der religiösen Quellen andererseits zu verteidigen. Gegenüber der Skepsis hat sie auf die positive Bedeutung aller Form — und somit auch des Wortausdrucks — zu verweisen, auf „die — freilich gewissen Spannungsmöglichkeiten der Sinnerfüllung einschließende, daher *relative* — Bestimmtheit ihres Sinnes.“ (ZH 288T). Dem Formalismus gegenüber wird sie eine dem spezifischen Gehalt religiöser Zeugnisse gerecht werdende Auslegung fordern müssen.

Die Hermeneutik, die dem heiligen Schrifttum gerecht werden will, wird also eine Interpretation sicherstellen müssen, die die volle Intention des von den betreffenden Urkunden Gemeinten zum Ausdruck kommen läßt. Aber sie wird es sich auch nicht nehmen lassen, den so

erhobenen Sinn in einen höheren Zusammenhang ein zuordnen und so den „eigentlichen Sinn“ zu gewinnen. Dieses „übergreifende Verstehen“ (Englisch: „integral understanding“) will also zu einem Sinn gelangen, der eine weiterführende kritische Explikation der Ausdrucksintention darstellt. Hier findet das alte hermeneutische Postulat seine Berechtigung, den Autor besser zu verstehen, als er sich selbst verstanden hat.

Zum „übergreifenden Verstehen“ gehören somit zwei Stufen: 1. die Aufdeckung der Tatsachen einschließlich ihres vollen Intentionsgehaltes, ein Vorgang, der ausschließlich an der Idee der empirischen Objektivität orientiert ist, und 2. „Auswertung“ (*evaluation*) im Kontext systematisch-religionswissenschaftlicher Begriffe. Diese systematischen Begriffe aber werden gewonnen durch Vergleich und Typologie. Die Typen bilden den obersten Maßstab für die religionssystematische Auswertung. So ist die Bildung der Typen das Äußerste, zu dem der Religionshistoriker in seiner Verstehensarbeit fortschreiten kann: „Are types then the last word which the historian of religion has to contribute? Very possibly, yes... he cannot... go beyond the descriptive task to answer the normative question.“ (Types 229).

Somit wird die eminente Bedeutung der Typologie für die religionswissenschaftliche Verstehensarbeit klar. Die Gefahr einer verabsolutierenden Typenlehre ist ausgeschaltet wenn man sich vergegenwärtigt, daß die Typenlehre nach den Worten Diltheys, die Wach hier zitierte, „ja nur dazu dienen (soll), tiefer in die Geschichte zu sehen...“ Somit ist letztlich das Historische immer wieder das Umgreifende, das auch die weiterführende systematische Erörterung bestimmt und umfaßt.

Wir stehen am Ende unserer kurzen Betrachtung der Grundgedanken einer ja nur in Ansätzen ausgeführten Wachschen Verstehenslehre. Gerade die Erörterung des Verstehensproblems ist heute wieder stark im Fluß. Die Tatsache, daß die heutige Diskussion über die Dilthey-Wachschen Ansätze hinausgegangen ist, dürfte die Religionswissenschaft nicht hidern, immer wieder Entscheidendes von Wach zu lernen. Nicht zuletzt gehört vielleicht zu diesem Entscheidenden das bewundernswerte wissenschaftliche Ethos dieses großen Geisteswissenschaftlers. Dieses Ethos spüren wir schon in seinem Frühwerk, wenn es dort heißt: „Wissenschaftliches Erkennen muß nicht ‘grausam’ sein; dort, wo es wirklich von reinem Erkenntnistrieb beseelt wird, wo nicht andere Mächte es in ihren Dienst und Sold genommen haben, wird es auch mit

Ehrfurcht an die großen Geheimnisse, and die rätselhaften Dinge herantreten, die es nicht etwa profanieren, nicht auflösen, sondern die es schauen will in ihrer Herrlichkeit und in ihrem Elend, in ihrer Schauerlichkeit und in ihrer Macht." (RW 36).

DER AVATĀRAGEDANKE IM HINDUISMUS DES NEUNZEHNTE UND ZWANZIGSTE JAHRHUNDERTS.

VON

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Im Begriff des Avatāra verbindet sich der Gedanke eines „Teilabstieges“ der Gottheit mit dem der „Lastabwälzung“: der Gott steigt mit einem Teil seiner selbst auf die Erde herab, um sie vor einer drohenden Gefahr wie z.B. Überbevölkerung oder Dämonenbedrohung zu bewahren. Die Verbindung dieser beiden Gedanken führte, wie Hacker gezeigt hat ¹⁾, zur Unterscheidung des Avatāra von anderen Erscheinungsformen der Gottheit und zur Entwicklung der Avatāralehre, die immer mehr Mythen verschiedenen Ursprungs an sich zog und systematisierte. Am bekanntesten ist die klassische Folge der zehn Avatāras, in denen Viṣṇu in den vier Yugas erscheint: als Fisch (matsya), Schildkröte (kūrma), Rieseneber (varāha), Mannlöwe (naraśiṃha) im Kṛtayuga, als Zwerg (vāmana), Rāma mit dem Beil (Paraśurāma) und Rāma im Treta, als Kṛṣṇa im Dvāpara, als Buddha zu Beginn und als Kalki am Ende des Kalizeitalters. In der Aufnahme Buddhas zeigt sich die integrierende Kraft der Avatāralehre, die ursprünglich fremde Lehren aufnahm, ohne sie gleichzeitig zu akzeptieren. Viṣṇu erscheint als Buddha, um die Dämonen durch die Verbreitung von Irrlehren zu verwirren. Der Buddhismus wird damit nicht als Lehre anerkannt ²⁾.

1) Vgl. P. Hacker, „Zur Entwicklung der Avatāralehre“ in: *WZKSO*, Bd. IV, 1960, S. 47 ff.

2) Vgl. hierzu A. J. Gail, „Buddha als Avatāra Viṣṇus im Spiegel der Purāṇas“ in: *XVII Deutscher Orientalistentag*, Teil 3, *ZDMG Supplementa*, I, 1969, S. 917 ff. Nur der Satz, dass Viṣṇu als Buddha vor den Häretikern schütze, scheint eine positive Integration des Buddhismus zu vertreten, vgl. Gail, S. 922. Die Verwerfung der buddhistischen Lehre findet sich jedoch auch in der weiteren Entwicklung; Jīva Gosvāmin zählt Buddha unter Viṣṇus Avatāras und verspottet gleichzeitig den Buddhismus (Vgl. S.K. De, *The early History of the Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal*, Calcutta, 1961², S. 315).

Avatāra ist also eine Inkarnation, die um einer bestimmten sozial-ethischen Zielsetzung willen erfolgt. „Wann immer eine Ermattung des Dharma und eine Erhebung des Nichtdharma stattfindet, o Bhārata, lasse ich mich selbst entstehen“ heisst es in dem berühmten Gītāvers, der zum „Ausgangspunkt“ der Avatāralehre wurde ³⁾. Die sozialetische ist mit einer soteriologischen Zielsetzung verbunden, die in der späteren Entwicklung vor allem seit Rāmānuja immer stärker betont wird: Viṣṇu steigt sowohl herab um den Dharma wiederaufzurichten und damit die allgemeinen Voraussetzungen zur Erlösung zu verbessern, als auch um von den Gläubigen geschaut werden zu können, und ihnen durch Bhakti unmittelbar zur Erlösung zu verhelfen ⁴⁾. Diese Erleichterung des Zugangs zur Erlösung wird durch den unaufhaltsamen Niedergang von Welt und Mensch erfordert und gerechtfertigt. In den vier Yugas wird der Dharma immer geringer. Während er im Kṛtayuga noch „vierbeinig“, d.h. vollkommen ist, ist er im gegenwärtigen Yuga nur noch „einbeinig“. Dementsprechend ist der Mensch immer weniger imstande, den Dharma zu halten und zur Erlösung zu gelangen. Er bedarf in immer stärkerem Masse der Hilfe. In diesem Sinne sagt ein purāṇischer Text vom Menschen: „Was er durch Meditation im Kṛta, durch Darbringung von Opfern im Tretā und durch Anbetung im Dvāpara erwirbt, das erwirbt er im Kali, nachdem er Keśava genannt hat. Ein Übermass von Dharma gewinnt in hohem Masse ein Mensch im Kali durch geringe Anstrengung, o ihr Dharmakundigen, daher bin ich mit dem Kali zufrieden“ ⁵⁾. Die „sich perfektionierende Selbstoffenbarung Gottes“ in der aufsteigenden Folge der Avatāras ⁶⁾ entspricht also der absteigenden Folge der Zeitalter und versucht, sie zu kompensieren. Dies ist jedoch letztlich nicht möglich, die absteigende Folge der Yugas wiederholt sich in unendlichen Perioden, Kalki bringt nicht die endgültige Volledung des Dharma, sondern leitet nur ein neues Kṛtayuga ein, das wiederum verfallen wird ⁷⁾.

3) Hacker, a.a.O., S. 47: Gītā IV, 7.

4) Vgl. Rāmānuja, *Gītābhāṣya* II, dazu Hacker, *Prahlāda. Wesen und Wandel einer Idealgestalt*, Wiesbaden 1960, S. 78, A. 3.

5) W. Kirfel, *Zur Eschatologie von Welt und Leben*, Bonn 1959, S. 48.

6) J. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens I*, Stuttgart 1960, S. 250.

7) Kalki erscheint teilweise am Ende des Kalizeitalters, teilweise auch zu Beginn des neuen Kṛtayugas. Vgl. dazu E. Abegg, *Der Messiasglaube in Indien und Iran*, Berlin 1928, S. 57 ff.

Im neueren Hinduismus der Gegenwart erscheint der Avatāragedanke nicht mehr mit diesem letztlich zyklischen Geschichtsbild verbunden. Vielmehr werden Avatāras meist beschrieben als verschiedenartige Inkarnationen der Gottheit, deren aufsteigende Folge sich durch alle Religionen zieht und den allgemeinen religiösen und sittlichen Fortschritt der Menschheit bewirkt. So schreibt Radhakrishnan: „Das Göttliche steigt auf den irdischen Plan hernieder, um die Erde zu höherer Stufe emporzuführen. Gott kommt herab, wenn der Mensch emporsteigt . . . Durch seine Lehre und sein Beispiel zeigt er, wie sich das menschliche Wesen auf eine höhere Stufe erheben kann“⁸⁾. Diese Deutung spielt im neueren Hinduismus eine wichtige Rolle, sie wird immer wieder herangezogen, um die allumfassende Universalität des Hinduismus zu begründen und zu illustrieren. Die Verbindung der Avatāralehre mit dem Fortschrittsgedanken, die ihr zu Grunde liegt, ist das Ergebnis einer Entwicklung, die mit Ram Mohan Roy beginnt. Meilensteine dieser Entwicklung sind die Interpretationen von Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Vivekānanda und Aurobindo Ghose.

Bekanntlich beginnt mit Ram Mohan Roy eine neue Epoche im Hinduismus, die auch als Neohinduismus bezeichnet wird⁹⁾. In ihr vollzieht sich die Auseinandersetzung mit dem Christentum und dem naturwissenschaftlichen Weltbild und eine entsprechende Reinterpretation der hinduistischen Tradition. In diesem Prozess wurde Avatāra geradezu zu einem Schlüsselwort, das in charakteristischer Weise verschieden gedeutet und gewertet wurde. Mit der unterschiedlichen Interpretation des Avatāragedankens ist jeweils auch eine apologetisch wertende Deutung von Monotheismus und Pantheismus verbunden.

Früher war Ram Mohan Roy Avatāra und „Avatārismus“ geradezu ein Schimpfwort. Avatāra war für ihn gleichbedeutend mit Götzenanbetung und Polytheismus, beides in seiner Sicht Degenerationsformen der Religion, die er in der Praxis des Hinduismus ebenso wie im trinitarischen Christentum findet. In seiner „Antwort auf die Frage, warum ich ein unitarisches Gemeindehaus besuche“ schreibt er: „Weil ich der Lehre vom Mensch-Gott oder Gott-Menschen, die von den

8) S. Radhakrishnan, *Die Bhagavadgītā*, Baden-Baden 1958, S. 177.

9) Vgl. R. Antoine, S.J., „A Pioneer of Neohinduism. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee 1838-1894“ in: *Indica. The Indian Historical Research Institute Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume*, Bombay 1953, S. 5 ff., S. 5 und P. Hacker, „Der Dharmabegriff des Neohinduismus“ in: *ZMRW*, Bd. 42 1958, S. 1 ff., S. 1 f.

Brahmanen auf Grund ihrer verderbten Überlieferungen ständig verbreitet wird, herzlich müde bin. Die gleiche Lehre vom Mensch-Gott, mag sie auch von einer besser gekleideten und besser ausgerüsteten Priesterschaft verkündet werden, kann nicht dazu angetan sein, mich in irgend einer Weise begierig oder neugierig darauf zu machen, sie zu hören" ¹⁰⁾). Die leidenschaftliche Verwerfung des Inkarnationsgedankens entspricht Roy's deistischem Religionsbegriff, der statisch ist: die Erkenntnis des einen Gottes, des Schöpfers, Erhalters und Zerstörers der Welt, ist der Vernunft aus der Schöpfung unmittelbar zugänglich. Diese Erkenntnis, die Roy als Monotheismus bezeichnet, ist der Anfang und der gemeinsame Kern aller Religionen und bedarf keiner Mittler und Propheten. Roy übernimmt das urmonotheistische Modell von Lafiteau und Voltaire und stellt sich damit in die Tradition der in der zweiten Hälfte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts in Calcutta tätigen britischen Orientalisten wie Colebrooke und Jones, welche die Geschichte des Hinduismus als allmähliche Degeneration einer ursprünglich idealen Religion und Gesellschaft deuteten ¹¹⁾). Der tatsächliche Verlauf der Religionsgeschichte ist demnach für die religiöse Erkenntnis irrelevant, da die verschiedenen Religionen nur als Abfall von einer ursprünglichen Einheit verstanden werden. Aus dieser Sicht erklärt sich, warum Roy in seiner Evangelienharmonie „The Precepts of Jesus, a Guide to Peace and Happiness" keinerlei Interesse für die Frage nach dem historischen Jesus zeigt, deren zu seiner Zeit gerade beginnende Problematik ihm, wie seine Ausführungen über die Frage der Wunder zeigen, durchaus bekannt war. Aus seinem statischen Religionsbegriff folgt auch, dass er keinen eigentlichen Absolutheits-Anspruch für den Hinduismus entwickelt. Es geht ihm nicht darum, festzustellen, dass der Hinduismus die allein wahre und beste, weil allumfassende Religion ist, sondern nur darum, zu zeigen, dass der wahre, richtig interpretierte Hinduismus die gleiche allgemeine „monotheistische" Wahrheit verkündet, die allen Religionen zu Grunde liegt.

Schon Keshub Chandra Sen löste sich von diesem starren Schema und vertrat den Gedanken der Inspiration. Doch war der Begriff des Avatāra von Roy's und Debendranath's Polemik her noch zu belastet, als dass er positiv wieder hätte aufgenommen werden können. Dies tat

¹⁰⁾ Ram Mohun Roy; *English Works*, Calcutta 1928, Bd. 1, S. 223.

¹¹⁾ Vgl. dazu D. Knopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance*, Los Angeles 1969, S. 38 ff.

erst Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Die geistesgeschichtliche Bedeutung des Verfassers von „Bande Mātaram“ (1838-1894) ist erst in jüngerer Zeit herausgestellt worden ¹²⁾. Sie besteht vor allem darin, dass Bankim den purānischen Hinduismus wieder entdeckte, und damit die tatsächlich gelebte Praxis des Hinduismus nicht mehr als Degenerationserscheinung abtat, sondern in ihrer historischen Entwicklung würdigte. „Der wahre Hinduismus ist in der Geschichte des Hinduismus enthalten“ ¹³⁾, dieser Satz ist das Motto seiner Interpretation, welche darlegt, dass der Hinduismus die gesamte Entwicklung der Religionsgeschichte umfasst, und deshalb die vollkommenste Religion ist ¹⁴⁾. Bankim übernimmt die Theorien von Tylor und Max Müller, um darzutun, dass in den vedischen Göttern keine übernatürlichen Wesenheiten, sondern nur immanente Naturmächte verehrt wurden. Er stellt heraus, dass die vedische Götterverehrung also nicht polytheistisch, sondern eigentlich pantheistisch sei und somit der späteren theoretischen Ausbildung des Pantheismus im Vedānta entspreche. Pantheismus aber ist, wie Bankim betont, die einzige Religionsform, die dem modernen naturwissenschaftlichen Denken standhalten kann. Er wendet sich gegen die von Roy vertretene Möglichkeit, den Schöpfer aus der Schöpfung zu erkennen, da die Menschen grundsätzlich nichts erkennen können, was jenseits der Naturgesetze liegt, und betont, dass einzig der Pantheismus, der die *prima causa* nicht ausserhalb, sondern innerhalb der Natur findet, wissenschaftlich haltbar sei. Die Auflösung des Polytheismus in Pantheismus ist jedoch für Bankim weder der Endpunkt der Religionsgeschichte noch die eigentliche Essenz des Hinduismus. Denn aus seiner Sicht ist Religion „ihrer Substanz nach Kultur“, ihre Aufgabe ist die Förderung der Kultur, d.h. des sittlichen Fortschrittes der Menschheit. Diesen positivistischen Religionsbegriff hat Bankim aus den theologischen Schriften des Historikers John Robert Seeley, Verfasser des berühmten „Expansion of British Empire“ übernommen. In den „Letters on Hinduism“, einer frühen, wenn nicht der ersten Skizze seiner theologischen Gedanken ¹⁵⁾,

12) Vgl. R. Antoine, *op. cit.*

13) Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *Letters on Hinduism*, Calcutta o.J., S. 24.

14) „It is the province of the educated Hindu to restore the grand meaning of the primitive myth, and to treasure it up as true Sacred History — Sacred History in the sense of a history of true Religious Conceptions“, *Ibid.* S. 24.

15) Vgl. Brajendra Nath Bannerji u. Sajani Kanta Das, „Preface“ in: *Letters on Hinduism*, a.a.O., S. 1.

zitiert Bankim häufig einen Verfasser von „Ecce Homo“ für die Gleichsetzung von Religion und Kultur. Diese Gleichsetzung zieht sich als Leitmotiv durch Seeley's erstes theologisches Buch „Ecce Homo“, eine liberale Darstellung des Lebens Jesu, die 1865, also ein Jahr vor Erscheinen von Bankim's „Kṛṣṇacāritra“ zunächst anonym erschien und grosses Aufsehen erregte.

Auf die Seeley'sche Gleichsetzung von Religion und Kultur geht auch die Bankim'sche Deutung des Dharmabegriffes ¹⁶⁾ zurück. Ganz im Sinne von Spencer und Comte bezeichnet Bankim Humanität und ihre Verwirklichung als den Dharma aller Menschen. Dieser Dharma kann jedoch nicht mit Hilfe des Pantheismus erfüllt werden. Immer wieder führt Bankim aus, dass der Pantheismus angesichts der **Hauptaufgabe** der Religion, den sittlichen Fortschritt der Menschheit zu bewirken, versagt, weil er zu abstrakt ist. Die höchste Stufe menschlicher Vollkommenheit kann sich nur in Anlehnung an ein Vorbild bilden. Dieses Vorbild ist die Inkarnation des einen Gottes. Wie Hacker gezeigt hat, nimmt Bankim den von Prahlāda herausgestellten viṣṇuitischen Gedanken „Gott ist in allem und in allen“ auf ¹⁷⁾. Mit Hilfe dieses Gedankens kann er den Pantheismus dem Monotheismus weit besser unterordnen, als dies etwa Seeley gelingt. Nur der persönliche Gott vermag es, die sittliche Vervollkommenheit der Menschheit zu bewirken, er sorgt, wie Bankim ausführt, für die Schöpfung, die Erhaltung und — nicht etwa wie im traditionellen Hinduismus und noch bei Roy die Zerstörung — sondern den Fortschritt („unnati“) der Welt ¹⁸⁾. Damit ist der erste, entscheidende Schritt zur evolutionistischen Interpretation der Avatāralehre getan.

Roy hatte die Avatāralehre abgelehnt, weil es undenkbar sei, dass Gott ausserhalb der Naturgesetze in das Weltgeschehen eingreife. Bankim stellt heraus, dass die Lehre von den zehn Avatāras gerade die Lösung dieses auch für die zeitgenössische christliche Theologie gravierenden Problems darstellt. Die Avatāralehre illustriert, wie Gott sich der Existenzweise der verschiedenen Geschöpfe und damit den Naturgesetzen anpasst. Sie ist für Bankim der mythisch-legendäre Ausdruck für die Tatsache, dass „Gott zum Wohle seiner Geschöpfe ein-

16) Zum Dharmabegriff Bankims vgl. Hacker, *ZMRW*, Bd. 42, S. 8 ff.

17) Zum Gottesbegriff Bankims vgl. P. Hacker, „Schopenhauer und die Ethik des Hinduismus“ in: *Saeculum*, Bd. XII, 1961, S. 366 ff., u. S. 380.

18) Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, *Kṛṣṇacārita*, Calcutta 1866, S. 13.

greift und dabei mit Hilfe seiner eigenen Gesetze wirkt" 19). Historisch wirksam allerdings ist das Eingreifen Gottes nur in Kṛṣṇa geworden: er ist, wie Bankim in seinem „Kṛṣṇacāritra" ausführt, die einzige wirkliche Inkarnation Gottes, das eigentliche Zentrum des Hinduismus. In Bankim's Darstellung des Lebens Kṛṣṇas ist der Einfluss von Seeley's „Ecce Homo" deutlich spürbar. Für Seeley war Christentum gleichbedeutend mit „Enthusiasmus der Humanität", der „durch Jesus Christus den Menschen in vollkommenster Gestalt vor Augen gestellt wurde und ihr wie aus einer Quelle entströmt" 20). Bankim versucht in ähnlicher Weise das Leben Kṛṣṇas von allen späteren, mythologischen, übernatürlichen und phantastischen Zügen zu befreien und seinen wahren historischen Charakter als Vorbild hervortreten zu lassen. Kṛṣṇa ist die höchste Stufe der menschlichen Vollkommenheit, ein Muster aller Tugenden wie Menschenliebe, Mut, Gelehrsamkeit, Weisheit, usw., er ist die vollkommene Verkörperung und damit die Verkündigung des Dharmas der Humanitas, dessen Verwirklichung das Ziel der Menschheitsentwicklung ist. Doch begnügt Bankim sich nicht mit der trockenen Auffassung Seeley's, welche das Phänomen der Inkarnation von jeder Beziehung zur Transzendenz abschneidet und auf eine doch etwas moralinsaure Menschlichkeit beschränkt. Vielmehr spricht er, seiner speziellen, viṣṇuitischen Konzeption entsprechend, immer wieder von der realen Präsenz des transzendenten Gottes in Kṛṣṇa. In der Einleitung zum „Kṛṣṇacāritra" beantwortet Bankim die Frage, ob es für Gott möglich sei sich zu inkarnieren, nicht. Er begnügt sich damit, aufzuzeigen, dass es nicht unmöglich ist. Doch ist seine persönliche Ansicht nicht misszuverstehen, und es klingt beinahe wie die Ausführung des von Roy ironisch gemeinten Vorschlages, dass „alle, welche an die Inkarnation glauben, zusammenhalten sollen" 21), wenn er bekennt: „Ich glaube fest, dass Kṛṣṇa Gott ist. Das Endergebnis westlicher Bildung auf mich war, dass dieser Glaube stärker gefestigt wurde" 22).

19) Ders., *Letters* a.a.O., S. 33.

20) *Ecce Homo. Eine Darstellung von Jesu Christi Leben und Werk. Nach der sechsten Auflage des englischen Originals*, Erlangen 1867, S. 338.

21) Ram Mohan Roy, *English Works*, Bd. IV. Calcutta 1947, S. 59: ... the propriety of maintaining a good understanding and brotherhood among all who have correct notions of manifestation of God in the flesh, that we may cordially join, and go hand in hand...

22) Kṛṣṇacāritra, a.a.O., S. 9.

Diese Bankim'sche Interpretation war Ausgangspunkt und entscheidender Bestandteil der sogenannten neokṛṣṇaitischen Bewegungen, die sich um die Jahrhundertwende in Bengalen entwickelten²³⁾. Doch blieb diese Bewegung ebenso wie die spätere Reinterpretation des bengalischen Viṣṇuismus durch Bipin Chandra Pal ohne weiteren Einfluss²⁴⁾.

Der nächste entscheidende Schritt in der Entwicklung des Avatāra-gedankens findet sich bei Vivekananda. Er übernimmt das religionsgeschichtliche Modell von Bankim, stellt es aber, seiner vedāntistischen Anschauung entsprechend, vom Kopf wieder auf die Füße. Der Monotheismus gilt ihm zwar als „höchste Vorstellung der menschlichen Natur“²⁵⁾ und zur Erlösung unerlässlich, jedoch kommt ihr keine eigentliche Realität zu. Vielmehr ist die Vorstellung des persönlichen Gottes und der Monotheismus dem Pantheismus, der Vorstellung eines alles durchwirkenden unpersönlichen Prinzips, welche allein dem wissenschaftlichen Weltbild entspricht, untergeordnet²⁶⁾. Wichtiger noch als die bloße Vorstellung des persönlichen Gottes ist für Vivekananda der Avatāra als tatsächliche Erscheinung und Verwirklichung der Idee vom persönlichen Gott, deren Verehrung eine wesentliche Hilfe zur Erlösung ist. Zwar ist nach Vivekānanda's Botschaft eigentlich jeder Mensch strenggenommen eine Inkarnation, da er einen Teil der Gottheit in sich enthält und „verwirklichen“ kann, doch unterscheidet sich der Avatāra doch vom Ṛṣi und vom Paramahansa, Menschen, die diese Erkenntnis verwirklicht haben. Nur Avatāras vermögen es, aus dem Zustand des samādhi, der Vereinigung mit dem Alleinen, wieder zurückzukehren, um der Welt und der Menschheit Gutes zu erweisen, sie haben die Macht, dem Einzelnen unmittelbar zur Erlösung zu verhelfen, sie sind die einzige Form in der Gott geschaut werden kann, die höchste Offenbarung Gottes im Menschen, die unter allen Umständen verehrt werden muss²⁷⁾. Nur zwei Kategorien von Menschen sind von dieser Verehrung entbunden: die niedrigste, der Unmensch („human brute“) und die höchste, der

23) Vgl. dazu F. N. Farquhar, *Gītā and Gospel*, Madras 1903.

24) Vgl. z.B. Bipin Chandra Pal, *Bengal Vātshnavism*, Calcutta 1933 und „Sree Krishna“, Calcutta 1964².

25) *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Calcutta 1955 ff., Bd. III, S. 257

26) *Ibid.*, Bd. I, S. 449.

27) *Ibid.*, Bd. III, S. 53 ff. u. Bd. VIII, S. 140.

Paramahamṣa, welcher die Begrenzung seiner eigenen Natur überschritten hat und Gott in seiner wirklichen Gestalt verehren kann²⁸⁾. Vivekananda erklärt nicht, wie sich die Daseinsform des Avatāra, des Paramahamṣa und des Ṛṣi zueinander verhalten. Dies bleibt umso unklarer, als er Rāmakṛṣṇa immer als Paramahamṣa, gelegentlich jedoch auch als Avatāra bezeichnet²⁹⁾. In dieser Unklarheit zeigt sich wohl die grundsätzliche Schwierigkeit, die Avatāralehre vom Standpunkt des Vedānta her zu erklären.

Entscheidend für die Entwicklung des Avāṛagedankens im neueren Hinduismus ist, dass Vivekānanda von Rāmakṛṣṇa die Lehre von der Vielzahl der Avatāras, die Bankim als Legendenbildung abgetan hatte, wieder übernimmt und sie mit dem Fortschrittsgedanken verbindet. Diese Verbindung legt Vivekananda Kṛṣṇa selbst in den Mund, indem er ihn sagen lässt: „Wann immer die Tugend sinkt und die Irreligion vorherrscht, steige ich herab. Wieder und wieder komme ich. Daher, wann immer du eine grosse Seele siehst, die um die Erhebung der Menschheit kämpft, wisse, dass ich gekommen bin“³⁰⁾. Dieser Ausspruch ist eine Kompilation aus der Gītā, der erste Teil ist der berühmte Vers IV, 7 (s.o.), der zweite Teil ist eine allerdings sehr freie Wiedergabe von X, 41, wo es wörtlich heisst: „Welches Wesen auch immer machtvoll, schön und gewaltig ist, das erkenne als aus einem Teil meines Glanzes entstanden.“ Die Paraphrase Vivekananda's kennzeichnet seine Amplifizierung des Avatāratedankens, die er bewusst unternimmt, um alle Religionen einbeziehen zu können³¹⁾. Der Gītāvers besagt nur, dass Gott in allem ist und wirkt. Daraus folgt, dass er auch in anderen Göttern und Religionen wirkt. Dieser Gedanke wird auch in der Gītā ausgeführt, allerdings mit der entscheidenden Einschränkung, dass die Menschen das nicht wissen und daher zur wahren Erkenntnis geführt werden müssen. „Auch jene, welche als Verehrer anderer Götter voller Glauben opfern, auch sie, o Kuntīsohn, opfern mir, (wenn auch) nicht nach der Vorschrift. Denn ich bin der Geniesser und der Herr aller Opfer. Jedoch kennen sie mich nicht

28) Ibid., Bd. III, S. 55.

29) Ibid., Bd. VII, S. 484.

30) Ibid., Bd. I, S. 444, vgl. auch Bd. III, S. 251.

31) Ibid., Bd. III, S. 252 „All the ideals of Religion that already exist in the world can be immediately included, and we can patiently wait for all the ideals that are to come in the future, to be taken in the same fashion embraced in the infinite arms of the religion of the Vedānta.“

wirklich, daher fallen sie" ³²⁾). Diese entscheidende Einschränkung die sich auch in der Aufnahme Buddhas unter die Avatāras und der gleichzeitigen Verwerfung des Buddhismus als Lehre zeigt, fehlt bei Vivekananda. Er sagt nicht nur, dass alle aussergewöhnlichen Menschen, die Stifter und Verkünder anderer Religionen also letztlich Erscheinungsformen der einen Wirklichkeit sind oder in ihrem Auftrag handeln, sondern behauptet auch, dass sie alle im Kern das Gleiche lehren ³³⁾ und Vorbilder zu ein und demselben Ideal seien. Dieses Ideal ist für Vivekānanda aber nicht wie für Bankim in erster Linie der sittliche Fortschritt, sondern das Eingehen in den Zustand des „sāmādhī“. Die Erkenntnis des „tat tvam asi“, welche das ermöglicht, ist für Vivekānanda der unüberbietbare Höhepunkt der religionsgeschichtlichen Entwicklung. Dennoch gibt es auch weitherhin eine gewisse Entwicklung, denn diese Erkenntnis kann sich im Laufe der Geschichte wieder verhüllen oder auch leuchtender zur Geltung gebracht werden. Fortschritt ist demnach die Verbreitung dieser Erkenntnis. Er wird von den Ṛṣis, Propheten und Avatāras aller Religionen vorangetrieben, welche immer wieder auf die eine unwandelbare Realität hinter den gerade geläufigen religiösen Vorstellungen hinweisen, sie daraufhin neu interpretieren und damit auch einen gewissen allgemeinen sittlichen Fortschritt der Menschheit bewirken.

Mit dieser Interpretation des Avatāragedankens, der den Fortschrittsgedanken aufnimmt und gleichzeitig relativiert, ist ein Absolutheitsanspruch gegeben, der für den gesamten folgenden neueren Hinduismus kennzeichnend ist und die Standpunkte von Roy und Bankim miteinander verbindet. Er besagt, dass der Hinduismus sowohl die klarste Darstellung der allen Religionen zu Grunde liegenden Urwahrheit enthält, als auch die gesamte religionsgeschichtliche Entwicklung, welche zur Verbreitung und Vertiefung deren Erkenntnis führt, umfasst.

In Vivekananda's Darstellung blieb die Frage nach dem Verhältnis zwischen dem im Avatāra herabgestiegenen Gott und dem im Paramahansa emporgestiegenen Menschen offen. Die Lösung dieses Problems und damit der äusserste Punkt in der Entwicklung des Avatāra-

³²⁾ Gītā IX, 23 f.

³³⁾ Vgl. z.B. *Complete Works*, Bd. I, S. 318: "If one Religion is true, all religions are true".

gedanken findet sich bei Aurobindo Ghose. Er definiert Avatāra als ein doppeltes Geschehen: „Es gibt zwei Aspekte der göttlichen Geburt, der eine ist ein Abstieg, die Geburt Gottes in der Menschheit, die Gottheit, welche sich selbst in der menschlichen Gestalt und Natur zeigt, der ewige Avatar, die andere ist ein Aufstieg, die Geburt des Menschen in der Gottheit, der Mensch, welcher sich in die göttliche Natur und das (göttliche) Bewusstsein erhebt.“ Avatāra ist das Gegenstück zur normalen menschlichen Geburt, wo „der Natur-Aspekt der universalen Gottheit, der die Menschheit annimmt, überwiegt. In der Inkarnation findet der Gott-Aspekt des gleichen Phänomens statt“³⁴⁾.

Der im Avatāra herabgestiegene Gott ist gleichzeitig auch immer ein „vibhūti“, ein zur höchsten Stufe emporgestiegener Mensch, der geistige und politische Führer seiner Epoche. Doch ist der Zweck des Erscheinens eines Avatāras nicht nur die Verbesserung der sozialen Zustände: „it is, we might say, to exemplify the possibility of the Divine manifest in the human being, so that man may see what that is, and take courage to grow into it. It is also to leave the influence of that manifestation vibrating in the earth nature and the soul of that manifestation presiding over its upward endeavour. It is to give a spiritual mould of divine manhood into which the seeking soul of the human being can cast itself“³⁵⁾. Aurobindo nimmt Bankim's Deutung des Avatāra als Vorbild und Verkünder des Dharmas der Humanitas³⁶⁾ auf und transzendiert sie: der Avatāra bewirkt nicht nur den sittlichen Fortschritt der Menschheit. Das in allen historischen Avatāras sich vollziehende Avatārageschehen³⁷⁾ zeigt vielmehr die Möglichkeit einer Vergottung der gesamten menschlichen Natur und treibt ihre

34) Sri Aurobindo Ghose, *Essays on the Gita*, Second Series, Calcutta, 1928, S. 814.

35) Aurobindo, a.a.O., S. 231.

36) Vgl. Hacker, *ZMRW*, Bd. 42, S. 10.

37) Vgl. K. Dockhorn, *Tradition und Evolution. Untersuchungen zu Sri Aurobindos Auslegung autoritativer Sanskritschriften*, Gütersloh o.J. S. 166 f.: „Die herabkommende Gottheit kommt der aufsteigenden Seele entgegen. Das ist in Aurobindos Religionsphilosophie ein geläufiges Bild für den zuverlässigen Fortgang der Evolution. Es bedarf nie der Konkretion in einer Avatargestalt. Das Bild ist unabhängig von ihr, bloss hier dringt es in es ein. Aber das heisst nun nicht, dass Aurobindo auf Grund des Erscheinens eines Avatars die hilfreiche Herabkunft der Gottheit ansagen kann, sondern umgekehrt: Die immer schon gewusste Herabkunft macht eine Erscheinung wie die des Avatars verständlich und sinnvoll.“

Verwirklichung voran. Nach Aurobindo betrifft das Avatārageschehen den Einzelnen *und* die Gemeinschaft, die einzelne Seele *und* die äussere menschliche Natur: dem inneren entspricht ein äusseres, „physisches“ Avatārageschehen³⁸⁾: „Der Avatar kommt sowohl um das himmlische Königreich auf Erden in der Gemeinschaft herbeizubringen, als auch um das himmlische Königreich in der einzelnen menschlich Seele zu errichten“³⁹⁾. Die Einbeziehung der äusseren Natur in das Avatārageschehen ist der entscheidende Schritt, den Aurobindo in der Entwicklung des Avatāragegedankens tut, und der auch in seinem eigenen Werk singulär ist⁴⁰⁾. Die Verwirkung seiner göttlichen Natur führt den Menschen nicht mehr, wie im traditionellen Schema, durch die Welt und ihre Ordnungen hindurch, und also über sie hinaus, sondern vielmehr in sie hinein, in eine Entwicklung, welche die Vergöttlichung der Welt zum Ziel hat und eine Evolution des Göttlichen selbst nicht ausschliesst.

Mit dieser Interpretation ist der äusserste Punkt in der Entwicklung des Avatāragegedankens erreicht. Die anfangs zitierte Darstellung Radhakrishnans ist deutlich von ihr abhängig, bleibt aber hinter ihr zurück.

Die Entwicklung der Avatāralehre im neueren Hinduismus zeigt, wie — in ständiger Auseinandersetzung mit dem verschiedenen Ausprägungen der christlichen Inkarnationslehre — aus der Lehre von der Herabkunft des Gottes schrittweise die Lehre vom Aufstieg des Menschen wurde. Die Verbindung des Avatāra- mit dem Fortschrittsge Gedanken ermöglichte es, zumindest theoretisch, die Lehren aller Religionen in den Hinduismus zu integrieren. Mit der schrittweisen Eingliederung der Avatāralehre in ein lineares Geschichtsbild verändert sich die ursprüngliche Relation zwischen der sozialetischen und der soteriologischen Zielsetzung. Im traditionellen Hinduismus bewirkt der Avatāra eine Wiederherstellung idealer Lebensbedingungen, gleichzeitig jedoch auch die Erlösung des Einzelnen von diesen Bedingungen. Beides gehört zusammen: Die Erlösung wird durch eine gute Weltordnung erleichtert, sie geschieht gleichsam durch diese Ordnung hindurch. Im neueren Hinduismus hingegen zeigt sich die Tendenz, diese Ordnung selbst zum Gegenstand der Erlösung zu machen.

38) Aurobindo, a.a.O., S. 242 f.

39) Ibid., S. 255.

40) Vgl. Dockhorn, a.a.O., S. 174.

COMMUNICATION

METHODOLOGY OF THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

Study Conference of the I.A.H.R. in Turku,
Finland August 27-31, 1973

The Executive Committee of the International Association for the History of Religions submitted at the XIIth International Congress of the I.A.H.R. in Stockholm, August 1970, that a study conference should be held in Turku, Finland, in 1973. The proposal was accepted by the Finnish delegates, and an agreement was reached upon the topic of the conference. The methodology of the science of religion was unanimously regarded as a timely and relevant theme. Recent developments in the field have been characterized by acute criticism of traditional approaches and the impact of increasing interdisciplinary exchange. Certain new modes of thought have revealed new vistas for comparative religion. The classic topics of debate have become somewhat uninspiring for the younger generation of scholars. Looking around they have noticed the increase of empirical field-work, the trend towards operationalization of scientific terms and the possibilities of confronting problems at various levels of abstraction. Regardless of one's theoretical allegiance there certainly exists a need for a more general evaluation of the present methodological situation. Whatever the results and recommendations are going to be in this respect, they should be formulated at a level which is practical for university teaching and the training of scholars.

The Organizing Committee of the Study Conference has, after consultation among colleagues, decided on the following topics:

- I. Oral and written documentation of religious tradition
 - a) Pre-literate stages and formation of canon in Book-religions
 - b) Taxonomy and source criticism of the oral tradition
 - c) Literary source criticism
- II. The future of the phenomenology of religion
 - a) Evaluation of previous methods

- b) Religio-ecological approach
- c) Religio-anthropological approach

III. Religion as expressive culture

- a) Theories concerning the ritual process
- b) The language of religion
- c) Depth structures of religious expression

For each of the nine topics two or three papers will be presented, mimeographed in advance. The papers will be distributed before the conference to a number of commentators. In all sessions the emphasis will be on discussion. The main language will be English. Since there is no overlapping program, the participants will have the opportunity to attend all sessions.

The Organizing Committee welcomes inquiries from all interested scholars who are requested to indicate the topic(s) which are likely to attract them.

All mail should be addressed to:
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JUHA PENTIKÄINEN

Chairman of the Organizing
Committee of the Study
Conference

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